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University of Alberta

Chinese Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii

by

Carol Jean Forster ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1995

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Carol Forster

#302, 11147-82 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 0T5

August 28, 1995

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Chinese Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* submitted by Carol Jean Forster in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Jean A Bernardi
Dr. Jean DeBernardi

Henry T. Lewis
Dr. Henry T. Lewis

Susan L. Smith
Dr. Susan L. Smith

August 17, 1995

Abstract

Scholarship on the Chinese in nineteenth-century Hawaii has focused on their plantation experiences or on Hawaii's anti-Chinese movement. However, early Chinese migrants in Hawaii participated in a diverse number of businesses. Their entrepreneurial success laid the foundations for the incorporation of subsequent generations of Hawaiian-born Chinese into Hawaii's multi-ethnic community. Current literature on Chinese immigrant entrepreneurship attributes their business success to their adherence to "traditional" culture. This thesis asks two questions: What was the "real" culture of Chinese migrants in nineteenth-century Hawaii. And, how did this "real" culture affect their success in business? This thesis analyzes the biographies of three Chinese businessmen who operated in Hawaii during the nineteenth century in order to answer these questions.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

> Unfortunately, much of the Asian American experience is what I call "negative history"; that is, for a significant part of their history in this country, Asians have been more celebrated for what has happened to them than for what they have accomplished....When one examines the positive aspects of Asian American history-that is, what these people did rather than what was done to them-other instructive patterns emerge. (Daniels 1988:4)

> We need to "re-vision" history to include Asians in the history of America...To answer our questions, we must not study Asian Americans in terms of statistics and what was done to them. They are entitled to be viewed as subjects-as men and women with minds, wills, and voices. (Takaki 1989:7)

Despite these calls for a "positive" history of Asians in America, most scholarship still portrays Asian Americans as victims. Regrettably, research on the Chinese experience in Hawaii has followed this trend, focusing on the Chinese plantation experience and the exclusive immigration laws imposed in 1893.

There is no denying that Chinese migrants in Hawaii were subject to both formal and informal forms of discrimination. Still, many Chinese managed to "succeed" within the system. I propose that a study of immigrant entrepreneurs is a way to examine the immigrant experience without lapsing into a "negative" history.

Immigrant entrepreneurs are not simply reactive; rather, they are proactive in their new social environment. They

perceive, create and engage in all types of entrepreneurial ventures. Nineteenth-century Chinese in Hawaii were rice planters, butchers, restauranteurs, bakers, pharmacists and merchants. Early Chinese-Hawaiian businessmen carved a niche for themselves while laying the foundations for the incorporation of the subsequent generations of Hawaiian-born Chinese into the economic, political and social life of Hawaii's multi-ethnic community.

In this thesis I examine the Chinese entrepreneur in both the Chinese-Hawaiian community and within Hawaii's multi-ethnic community during the latter half of the nineteenth century through the use of autobiographies and biographies.

This chapter is divided into three parts: first, I review the existing literature on Chinese in Hawaii. There is only one major work which deals with Chinese merchants in Hawaii. Therefore, in the second section, I will expand my discussion to include research on Overseas Chinese entrepreneurs in North America and Southeast Asia; and, I will address how the Chinese-Hawaiian scholarship fits into these current theoretical approaches. Finally, I will propose an alternative approach to the study of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in Hawaii.

Chinese Business in Hawaii

The tales of migrant Chinese rising to the top of Hawaii's business community have achieved almost mythic proportions. Romanzo Adams was one of the first scholars to legitimize the study of migrant Chinese in Hawaii. He argued against the concept of "race" in historical analysis and suggested that any attempt to interpret the behavior and experience of Chinese in Hawaii must be placed in the social and political context of the time. He states:

> Effects due to temporary and often unknown or uncomprehended conditions were attributed to something inherent in the nature of the Chinese people. This procedure made them seem queer to others. It prevented understanding. It exaggerated the significance of race by failing to give proper weight to circumstances. A reinterpretation made in the light of more recent developments serves, therefore, to emphasize the special circumstances under which they have lived and thus to make them more understandable to others on the basis of our common humanity. (Adams 1929:10)

Despite these good intentions, Adams accounts for the participation of early Chinese migrants in almost every business arena in Hawaii on their innate business "superiority". He claims:

> The nature of the Chinese superiority can be stated more specifically. In general, they work more steadily and they are more persistent in seeking opportunity. They are more thrifty and they keep such property as they acquire, not being easily cheated or easily induced to give disproportionately to ability. In business they are shrewd, buying at the most favorable prices and selling at about the price that yields the maximum net profit. They extend credit judiciously and usually they are able to collect. They enjoy good credit because they meet their own financial

> obligations faithfully. They are good at planning in the sense that when they make far-reaching plans they are likely to be workable....Attention is directed more steadily and consistently toward economic success and consequently they know much more about the business situation and are superior in their business technique. (Adams 1937:241)

Adams even identifies the procedure by which many migrant Chinese became independent producers and businessmen (1937:33). By saving wages from the plantations, the men would form partnerships to raise capital and lease land for rice growing or gardening. Or, starting as peddlers, many would range the country until they could open their own small stores. Adams concludes, "In the main they [Chinese migrants] followed old-country methods both in agriculture and in merchandising and a good many of them were successful" (1937:33). Therefore, according to Adams, the Chinese were enculturated in a tradition of enterprise and this tradition was simply transplanted when they migrated to Hawaii.

On the other hand, Glick argues that nineteenth-century Hawaii's expanding economy and relatively open society enabled Chinese migrants to take advantage of economic opportunities (1980:88). In addition, the insufficient number of *haole* [white] men to fill skilled positions made it possible for Chinese migrants to rise on the occupational scale (Glick 1942:671). So, although the *haoles* dominated Hawaiian business, their lack in numbers opened the door for Chinese seeking alternative economic opportunities.

Clarence Glick's publication, *Sojourners and Settlers:*

Chinese Migrants in Hawaii, is considered the most comprehensive examination of the history of the Chinese in Hawaii. He maintains that in their initial occupational accommodation, Chinese migrants acted as barterers and traders associated with *haole* businessmen and hawking goods from the North Atlantic (Glick 1980:90). He attributes their success in peddling to their status as "stranger" in Hawaii; as "outsiders" the Chinese could bargain without having to take into account the personal ties to which native Hawaiians were obligated (Glick 1980:69). As the Chinese population in Hawaii grew, the Chinese businessmen filled the niche of "ethnic businessmen"; they served the needs and wants of the Chinese-Hawaiian community (Glick 1980:90). So, according to Glick, it was a combination of being in the right place at the right time and possessing rudimentary business skills that propelled Chinese migrants into Hawaii's cosmopolitan economy.

Martin and Nelligan examine differential ethnic participation in Hawaii's business community in terms of three variables: cultural factors, defined as the beliefs, values, skills and life-styles of an ethnic group; social organization, classified as the group's "family structure, community cohesion, organizations and associations, and extra-group ties"; and, the setting, which includes the world economy, business cycles and discriminatory environment (unpublished m.s. 1986:2).

Martin and Nelligan conclude that the early Chinese in

Hawaii were familiar with a commercial economy, they possessed business knowledge and their norms and values promoted entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, during the nineteenth-century, the Chinese-Hawaiian community became increasingly organized and this cohesion provided access to financing and support. Finally, Hawaii's rapidly expanding economy placed the Chinese in a setting that was ripe with business opportunities. Given all these conditions the Chinese were able to advance in Hawaii's economy (Martin and Nelligan unpublished m.s. 1986:26-27).

In the only detailed study of Chinese merchants under the Hawaiian Monarchy, Huang describes four characteristics which pervades the Chinese merchant experience in nineteenth-century Hawaii (1989:293-297). First, Huang identifies opportune timing as the preeminent reason for the Chinese migrants' success. An expanding economy and little economic competition from the native Hawaiians afforded the Chinese a wide range of occupations. Second, Huang notes that many leading Chinese merchants acculturated to Western practices. She concludes that this ability to adjust and adapt was necessary to gain the confidence and friendship of the *haoles* who dominated Hawaii's economy. Third, Huang notes that Chinese individuals and firms readily used the Hawaiian law courts to settle business disputes. Finally, Huang observes that the development of Chinese voluntary associations was slower in Hawaii compared to most other Overseas Chinese communities.

Amongst these scholars is a recognition that nineteenth-century Hawaii's expanding economy was open to the participation of Chinese migrants. Opportunity, hard-work, and skill were all the "luck" the Chinese needed in order to succeed in business.

Immigrant Entrepreneurs

During the nineteenth century, thousands of Chinese left their homeland to migrate to almost every corner of the globe. Regardless of where these adventurers landed, they quickly established themselves in the business community of the host society. The pattern of Chinese immigrants elevating themselves from low-wage earners to businessmen is well documented by historians. As a result, immigrant entrepreneurs have increasingly gained the attention of scholars. There are a number of recurring themes running through the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship. In this section I identify these themes and discuss the theories dominating current literature on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Jenkins argues that his review of the literature on immigrant business suggests three categories of explanation: the reaction model, the cultural model and the model of economic opportunity (1984:23).

Jenkins' reaction model sees entrepreneurial activity of minority groups as a survival strategy employed in the face of a hostile host society who blocks occupational mobility.

Reaction model theories argue that the discriminatory sanctions, both formal and informal, of the host society "force" immigrants into business because it is easier to be self-employed in a racist environment. For example, King and Locke hypothesize that the legal and socioeconomic restrictions directed against the Chinese in the United States played a role in shaping the occupational patterns of the Chinese over the past one hundred years (1980:15-42). This "blocked mobility" stance suggests that Chinese immigrants confined their activities to non-competitive occupations such as personal service and retail.

In a similar argument, Ong attempts to explain immigrant entrepreneurship within the specific economic, political and social conditions of the time. For example, Ong argues that the role of ethnic culture in the entrepreneurial success of the ethnic group must be anchored in the broader societal context of the time (1981:95-112). Therefore, Ong looks at the evolution of Chinese laundries in early California in terms of what was happening economically and politically during this period.

Ong explains that as the mining economy collapsed, manufacturing and agriculture became the core of California's emerging capitalist economy. Concomitant to industrialization was rapid urbanization and, by 1880, most immigrant Chinese had moved from mining regions to California's cities. As wage laborers, the Chinese were an ideal workforce for factory

owners; they did not demand high or even equal pay to their white counterparts. But, white unions saw the cheap Chinese labor as a threat and actively and successfully campaigned to drive the Chinese out of manufacturing, construction and other better paying sectors. In other words, racial agitation created a hierarchically segmented economy or "dual labor market"; the Chinese were restricted to the lowest paying jobs (Ong 1981:100).

However, even within this restricted arena the Chinese maximized their opportunities. And, it is at this point that Ong argues ethnic culture is most important. That is, once blocked from alternative economic opportunities, the strength of the immigrant group's social ties and institutions determines the degree and form of collective action.

Because California's laundry trade was an area where competition with whites was minimal and the Chinese perceived self-employment in a positive light while having a strong ethnic community to rely upon, the Chinese were able to respond to a racially segmented economy with some success (Ong 1981:101). What Ong concludes is that the ideology of racism results in segmented labor markets; when faced with a racially segmented labor market, immigrants will respond by relying on their ethnic culture to seek economic advancement (1981:108). Clearly, Ong's analysis is a refinement of the "blocked mobility thesis" and emphasizes the importance of ethnic culture in business ventures.

In contrast to the reaction model of immigrant entrepreneurship, cultural models focus on the characteristics of the minorities themselves; some cultures are simply predisposed towards business activity. Thus, the cultural institution, values and intragroup solidarity of ethnic groups facilitates their entrepreneurial ventures. According to Bonacich and Modell, cultural theories,

> ...share the notion that these minorities are not simply creations of a particular environment; instead, the groups are seen as bringing to the environment characteristics of their own, which help account for the particular adaptation of the minority members. (1980:28)

Scholars have argued that some immigrant groups, particularly Asians, have an inherent cultural advantage in the business arena. That is, the cultural practices of Asians promote entrepreneurship. Light proposes that a necessary condition of entrepreneurial participation must be a "tradition of enterprise" (1972:22). He maintains that rotating-credit associations account for the Asian domination of small-business in America. These associations, or *hui*, are "formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation" (Ardener 1964:201). Access to these cooperative financial institutions affords Asians an entrepreneurial advantage, especially in the raising of capital to form businesses.

More recently, Light, Bhachu and Karageorgis have examined immigrant entrepreneurship through migration networks

(1993). The authors define migration networks as "sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin" (1993:25). Basically, Light, Bhachu and Karageorgis argue that networks do not just improve the efficiency of searches for appropriate migration locations but networks, themselves, create employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. The authors claim that migrant networks feed low-cost co-ethnic labor to immigrant entrepreneurs, provide information to immigrant entrepreneurs and provide access to various kinds of mutual aid and assistance. Therefore, Light, Bhachu and Karageorgis maintain that immigrant networks have a role in creating the immigrant economy because these networks provide entrepreneurial resources that expand the economic opportunities available to immigrants.

Transplanted kinship and intact family systems are also used to explain the entrepreneurial success of some immigrant groups. For instance, Barnett argues that the perpetuation and reconstruction of aspects of traditional Cantonese social structure are accommodating devices for the Overseas Chinese (1960:40-46). He maintains that small enterprise is the norm in Overseas Chinese communities and he identifies two forms of ownership: single entrepreneur, or family-owned, and partnerships. In both cases, Barnett concludes that ties of kinship and "quasi-kinship" are essential to all aspects of

immigrant business: raising capital, securing labor and cementing relationships with employees, and attracting customers.

Similarly, the personality of ethnic groups has been used to account for the business superiority of particular ethnic groups. So, the immigrant Chinese are "hard-working", "industrious" and "thrifty". Light argues that the process of immigration releases "latent facilitators" which enhances the entrepreneurial spirit of the immigrant group (1984:195-216). One facilitator is the psychological or relative satisfaction that results from emigrating from a low-wage country to a high-wage country. Therefore, immigrants are willing to accept long hours, low wages and physical risk in order to maintain business self-employment.

However, in his analysis of the predominance of Chinese business in Southeast Asia, Mackie argues that there must be other factors involved in explaining their business success besides traditional Chinese culture and values (1992:43). He states:

> But what other factors? How do those Chinese values relate to Overseas Chinese entrepreneurship? A useful first step would be to broaden the investigation to embrace 'values in their socio-economic and political context', which soon leads us into the wider terrain of structural factors as well as cultural heritage. Ideally, we need to take account also of the role of the state and the economic policies it ordains...as well as of various questions about society, markets, family structures and other relevant variables. (Mackie 1992:43)

Therefore, in order for scholars to truly understand the

relationship between Chinese values and entrepreneurship, they must expand their research to place those values within a larger context. In other words, scholars must also look at the social, political, and economic setting or situation of immigrant entrepreneurs.

Yee argues that although most nineteenth-century Chinese immigrants came from agrarian backgrounds, they were not only familiar with a commercialized economy but also held positive views toward capitalism and the individual accumulation of wealth (1984:44-67). These experiences and attitudes were positively transferred to the immigrant Chinese community. And, ethnic business was a natural outgrowth of these experiences and attitudes.

That nineteenth-century Chinese migrants possessed the business acumen to seek out and actively participate in North America's emerging capitalist economy is supported by Mei (1979). Mei suggests that China was engaged in some form of capitalism long before any Western influence, although she points out that technology and industrialization did not develop quickly enough to support the numbers of displaced peasants (1979:463-501). Mei argues that by the Southern Song and Ming dynasties, some economic relationships appeared in China which cannot be characterized as "feudal" in the Marxist sense.

Finally, Jenkins argues that the model of economic opportunity emphasizes that "ethnic minority business activity

is essentially no different from routine capitalist entrepreneurial activity, depending for its success or failure upon the opportunities presented by the market" (1984:231). According to Jenkins, the opportunity is typically an "ethnic niche" (1984:231). For example, according to the model of economic opportunity, the prevalence of Chinese laundries in nineteenth-century California was a result of capitalistic opportunity; Chinese migrants identified a societal need and they filled that need. However, as seen by the previous discussion, most theories of immigrant entrepreneurship suggest the process is not that simple.

A fourth theme that is prevalent in the literature on immigrant entrepreneurs is that of the "sojourner". How does the immigrant ethnic groups' status of "stranger" or "sojourner" influence their entrepreneurial activity? In other words, the process of immigration itself produces a certain kind of economic adaptation.

Siu defines the sojourner as a deviant type of "stranger" who clings to his/her own ethnic group and who is unwilling to detach him/herself from his/her place of origin thereby being unassimilable and "marginal" (1952:34-44). Bonacich argues that sojourning is the necessary condition that promotes the type of entrepreneurship which immigrant ethnic groups typically fulfil: the middleman (1973:583-594). That is, immigrants fill an intermediate role between the economic elites and the underclasses of the host society. These

migrants are concentrated in positions such as money lender, labor contractor, store owner and so on.

Bonacich lists three reasons why sojourning is the necessary condition which fosters middleman entrepreneurship: first, sojourners are in the host country to make money, not spend it. Therefore, sojourners quickly accumulate capital. Second, sojourners select occupations which do not tie them to the territory. They choose portable and liquidable occupations. Finally, sojourners have little reason to develop lasting relationships with the host society and therefore keep ethnic ties alive. Ethnic ties harbour strong internal assistance within the community thereby encouraging self-employment (1973:585-586).

Clearly, there is little consensus amongst scholars of immigrant entrepreneurs regarding explanations for the success of particular ethnic groups. Still, whether a proponent of the reaction model, the cultural model, the model of economic opportunity, or the "sojourner" model, almost every theory advanced about immigrant entrepreneurship utilizes a combination of these themes. And, the same can be said for the literature regarding Chinese businesses in Hawaii.

An Alternative Approach

All of the works discussed in the above sections are valuable to the understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship. However, with the exception of Huang, when analyzing how the culture of immigrants affects entrepreneurial activity, scholars assume that Chinese immigrant culture is "traditional" and rooted in ancestral customs. In 1937 Adams claimed, "Largely the business efficiency of the Chinese and also their success in the various fields of intellectual endeavor is a consequence of their traditions" (1937:241). Martin and Nelligan take Adams' observations one step further by stating, "...the business success of the Chinese as primarily a consequence of business knowledge, norms, values, and practices developed out of social conditions in the home country and *transplanted* to the Islands" (unpublished m.s. 1986:22 emphasis added).

There is no denying that Overseas Chinese maintained close financial, political and emotional ties to China. However, all historical evidence suggests that early Chinese migrants' "life-styles" were severely disrupted by the experience of immigration. Physical isolation, ethnic segregation and an imbalanced sex-ratio were characteristic of early Overseas Chinese communities. It is unlikely, given these characteristics, that immigrants were able to simply "transplant" their ancestral culture into their new homeland. Instead, immigrants had to "recreate" or adapt their culture

to its new environment. Rather than idealizing the culture of the Chinese in Hawaii as "traditional", I argue that scholars must examine the "real" Chinese-Hawaiian culture through ethnographic research or, in my case, through the autobiographies, biographies and oral histories of Chinese-Hawaiians.

Concomitant to examining the "real" Chinese-Hawaiian culture should be an analysis of how Chinese in Hawaii succeeded entrepreneurially and not why they succeeded. Current literature tends to focus on the why. Wong states:

> Although these studies have undoubtedly enriched our knowledge about immigrant entrepreneurs and have helped our understanding of immigrant behavior patterns in America, they have not been conclusive in explaining how entrepreneurship is achieved in ethnic enclaves. (1987:120)

Why are Chinese immigrants so successful in business? Because the host society is racist and the Chinese are channelled into non-competitive occupations; because the immigrant Chinese promote entrepreneurial activity through a "tradition of enterprise"; because the nature of the sojourner fosters money-making business schemes. All these explanations are valid but it is difficult to determine the why before understanding the how. How did the Chinese in Hawaii succeed in business? In the following chapters, I explore the "real" culture of the Chinese in Hawaii in order to determine how they succeeded in business.

Chapter 2

Chinese Migration to Hawaii

Since Captain James Cook "discovered" Hawaii in 1778, Chinese have migrated to the Islands. Driven by China's demand for sandalwood, Hawaii's first foreign trade was with China. On American and European ships Chinese artisans, traders and seamen were lured to *T'an-hsiang Shan*, the Sandalwood Mountains. By 1838 there were between thirty and forty Chinese counted among the four hundred foreigners living in Honolulu (Nordyke 1989:52). But the majority of Chinese did not emigrate to Hawaii until the 1850s.

Whaling was to be Hawaii's first major commercial enterprise. The discovery of a sperm whale ground near Japan spawned a rush of whalers from New England to the Pacific. The first whaler arrived in Hawaii in 1819 and Hawaii became the Pacific transshipment point (Lydon 1975:3). But the whaling industry was unpredictable and short-lived. Several factors contributed to the decline of the whaling industry: the numbers of whales and whalers varied from year to year resulting in an unstable economy for Hawaii, overwhaling forced whalers to take longer trips and less frequent stops in Hawaii, and the introduction of petroleum decimated the market for whale oil as a light source (Lydon 1975:3-4).

The decline of the whaling industry compelled the leaders of the Hawaiian Kingdom to promote agricultural development.

However, whalers had already effected how agriculture was to develop in Hawaii because the introduction of smallpox and other communicable diseases quickly reduced the native Hawaiian population and thus reduced the labor force in Hawaii. If Hawaii was to compete in the world market it would be on the backs of imported laborers. In 1850, Kamehameha III declared, "The prosperity of the Islands...requires a greatly increased cultivation of the soil which will not be possible without the aid of foreign capital and labor" (quoted in Lydon 1975:4). After less than successful ventures in cotton, coffee, rice, beef, wheat and tobacco, investors focused on the sugar industry. However, labor remained an obstacle until 1852.

When, in 1850, the sugar plantation owners demanded a stronger labor force than the dwindling native Hawaiian population could provide, the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society was founded with the mission to obtain suitable workers. The Society turned first to China. Ironically, it was a Chinese man who was the first to process sugar on the Islands. In 1802, Wong Tze-chun used rudimentary equipment to process sugar on the Island of Lanai. Although the Americans and British came to dominate the sugar industry, Chinese knowledge and ingenuity pioneered sugar processing in Hawaii (Glick 1980:2-3). In 1852, one hundred and eighty coolie laborers, from the South China provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung, were imported to Hawaii under the Master and

Servants Act (Nordyke 1989:54). The contract bound the coolies to serve for a period of five years at three dollars per month in addition to passage, food, clothing and shelter provided by the planter who engaged their services (Coman 1903:11). Glick estimates that prior to Annexation in 1898, of the estimated 46,000 Chinese migrants who came to Hawaii, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths began as laborers on sugar or rice plantations (1980:23).

The Chinese were welcomed to Hawaii and praised as hard-working individuals. Six months after the arrival of 195 Chinese men, the President of the Hawaiian Agricultural Society, William L. Lee declared:

> The Chinese brought here in the 'Thetus' have proved themselves quiet, able and willing men, and I have little doubt, judging from our short experience, that we shall find coolie labor to be far more certain, systematic, and economical than that of the natives. They are prompt at the call of the bell, steady in their work, quick to learn, and when well fed will accomplish more, and in a better manner, than any other class of operatives we have. (quoted in Lydon 1975:22)

There are a number of reasons why the Chinese emigrated. The vast majority of migrants hailed from the areas surrounding the Pearl River delta in Kwangtung province.

> Nonetheless, we find that those parts of China which were home to most of the U.S.-bound emigrants shared several features: they were all undergoing rapid and drastic socioeconomic change, they were all areas with a large impoverished population, and they were all near seaports where foreign trade was well-established--Canton, Hong Kong, and Macao. (Mei 1979:466)

The Opium War of 1840, the Taiping Rebellion, 1850-1864,

interclan warfare between the Punti and the Hakka and natural disasters such as flooding and droughts all magnified the hardships faced by the rural classes (Mei 1979, Char 1930). The Qing government was unable to improve conditions for its displaced citizens, nor could it prevent emigration even though traditional Chinese law forbade it. In 1859, seven years after the first Chinese were imported to Hawaii, the provincial government of Kwangtung sanctioned the foreign recruitment of Chinese laborers.

As their contracts expired, many Chinese confounded plantation owners by not renewing their labor contracts. In 1869, a planter said, "One objection I have to this class of labor is that although offered double their present wages to renew their contracts, they refuse to do so" (quoted in Lee 1990:112). Instead, the Chinese left the plantations in search of other economic opportunities.

Sugar Masters

Chinese were among the first foreigners to make their home in the Islands. They came on American and British ships sailing the China trade route and they brought with them the expertise that would hail the beginning of the booming Hawaiian sugar industry. Although sugar cane had been brought to the Islands by the Polynesians who relished the juice of the sugar cane, they did not process the sugar cane into sugar (Glick 1980:2). However, sugar cane had been cultivated and

processed into sugar in Southern China for centuries (Char 1974:3). And, as previously mentioned, Wong Tze-Chun was the first to attempt sugar processing on the island of Lanai.

Even though their contribution to the development of the Hawaiian sugar industry is documented, very little is known about the sugar masters or *tong see* whose expertise was sought after. Kuykendall notes that between 1835 and 1840 a number of sugar mills were in operation on Maui, Oahu and Kauai and that, "An interesting point is the large part taken by Chinese in the setting up and operation of these mills" (1938:180-181). According to Glick, approximately half a dozen sugar masters were manufacturing sugar on the island of Hawaii between 1840 and 1850 (1980:3).

Sugar masters were imported to Hawaii by both Chinese-owned businesses established in Hawaii and *haole* entrepreneurs who were drawn to the potential of the expanding sugar industry. Wong Tze-Chun's unsuccessful attempt on Lanai in 1802 was followed by ill-fated ventures by Americans and Europeans. The first sugar cane plantation in Manoa Valley, Oahu, was run by John Wilkinson who had experience with sugar cane from the West Indies (Char 1974:4). But, after his death in 1827, the plantation failed because there was no one with the expertise to process sugar. Char argues that, "The South China manufacturers soon filled this gap with the establishment of the Hungtai sugar works at Wailuku, Maui in 1828" (1974:4).

In 1835, William French imported a number of Chinese laborers along with a mill and the apparatus for processing sugar with the intention of setting up a sugar mill on Kauai (Kuykendall 1938:175). Evidently, long before the Masters and Servants Act of 1850 legitimized the importation of Chinese as laborers, Chinese businessmen in Hawaii and their Anglo counterparts recognized that the Chinese would play an important role in the development of the Hawaiian sugar industry, not just as laborers, but as sugar masters.

Chinese Businesses in Hawaii before 1850

On August 11, 1844, *The Friend* listed three Chinese stores operating in Honolulu: Samping & Co., Ahung & Co., and Tyhune (quoted in Char 1974:11). Char characterizes these early Chinese entrepreneurs as "merchant-adventurers" who were:

> ...versatile enough to venture into not only shopkeeping but also the manufacture of sugar. They associated with and assisted Anglo-Americans in similar pursuits. In turn they were given advice and assistance by their new-found business friends - Hawaiians, English, and Americans. Their language and their dress were uncommon, but they made a place for themselves in a fairly open community. (1974:12)

Hungtai is the business name whose principal partners were Ahung and Atai. The firm was already established in 1828 when it went into sugar production at Wailuku on Maui (Char 1974:14). One of the earliest sugar ventures in Hawaii, Hungtai advertised their wares in the 1841 *Polynesian*:

> Have for sale, at their plantation, at Wailuku, East side of Maui, a quantity of superior WHITE SUGAR, not inferior to the best imported Loaf Sugar. Also WHITE SYRUP, superior article for family use.
>
> For the information of merchants and others trading to these islands, they would state, that they are enlarging their business, having now 150 acres of Sugar Cane under cultivation, and in the course of the next season will have 250 acres. By the 1st of December next, they will have a large lot of Brown Sugar for sale, on as reasonable terms as can be offered by any other firm.

There is no information as to how long this joint sugar business venture continued.

There is evidence that Atai was a close associate of Stephen Reynolds and William French, both influential businessmen in Hawaii. The Canton Hotel, a boarding house fitted with a billiard parlor, bowling alley and bar, was owned jointly by Atai and French (Char 1974:18). On September 13, 1936, Stephen Reynolds, an American merchant, borrowed $300 from Atai to pay for imported Chinese goods (Char 1974:20).

The other principal partner in Hungtai was Ahung. He married Louisa Chu Chu Gilman, adopted daughter of John Neddles Gilman. Her mother was Kamoku and her father was Nahili or Kaniliaulaninui, descendant of Kaulii, a chief of Oahu. Upon his death in 1845, Ahung bequeathed to his wife and daughter, Hoolanie, his house. Another provision of the will required that the store, including all merchandise within, be sold and the proceeds sent to Ahung's son, Ahchoc, who was living with his grandfather in Macao. Char suggests

that Ahchoc was probably Ahung's son from a previous Hawaiian marriage or from a Chinese wife (1974:23-24).

Tyhune Store's principal partner was Wong Tai-hoon and others who held minor shares for short periods were Apana and Asam. The Tyhune store dealt primarily in dry goods and groceries as well as wine and spirits. It cannot be confirmed when Tyhune was founded but a Ladd & Co. letter of September 23, 1835 reported buying a parcel of blue cotton from Tyhune (Char 1974:25).

In fact, Tyhune was employed by Ladd & Co to mediate relations between Chinese workers and the company. Char observes, "Ladd & Co. found it expedient to use Tyhune, perhaps to learn the Chinese methods of producing sugar (upon which they could improve), and as liaison between the Chinese workers and the company" (1974:26). However, by 1839, Ladd & Co. were apparently disenchanted by Tyhune, and William Ladd reported that, "Today we gave Tyhune notice that we should discharge him tomorrow night. We have had him long enough. And have a better person to take his place" (quoted in Char 1974:26).

Tyhune married Wahinekapu, and it was through his father-in-law, Kahanaumaikai, that Tyhune was able to gain full title to the land on which his store sat. Kahanaumaikai claimed the land and in 1852 was granted fee simple title to the land from the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Title. Kahanaumaikai had already sold the land to Tyhune through some

complicated maneuvering in 1850 (Char 1974:28).

Samsing & Co., or Samping & Co., was also involved in diverse merchant activities: stores, inter-island shipping vessels, sugar planting and manufacturing, imported American and Chinese goods, and a Honolulu bakery. The principal partners were Asam and Ahmow; the original business name was Sam & Mow, bakers. Samsing & Co. not only employed Chinese already living in the islands but actively encouraged laborers to migrate from the home country (Char 1974:30). In 1847, Samsing & Co. bought Honolulu's first fire engine ostensibly to protect their own business but the engine was also available to others for a fee (Glick 1980:198).

Asam married Makahema in 1835 or 1836. Ahmow married Kepola January 28, 1844. Unfortunately, both partners drowned in Honolulu Harbor on August 4, 1847 while trying to come ashore from a schooner that had brought them from Hilo. However, Samsing survived; Wong Chiu, guardian of Asam's son, Ahpong and Yung Sheong constituted the new partnership. Although Samsing changed ownership several times, it remained the largest Chinese firm in Hawaii, amassing a fortune of $50,000 by 1855.

This brief description of three early Chinese businesses in Hawaii demonstrates three points: first, Chinese entrepreneurs held diverse business interests. Apparently, Chinese migrants were not limited in their business ventures. In Hawaii's relatively open community, the Chinese could

borrow, invest, and profit from any number of enterprises.

Second, Chinese entrepreneurs engaged in a symbiotic relationship with *haole* merchants in Hawaii. Glick describes early migrant Chinese businesses as "ethnic", catering to the tastes and needs of the Chinese themselves and avoiding interpersonal relationships with other ethnic groups (1980:90). Evidently, when it comes to business, lending and borrowing cross-cut ethnic lines.

Third, Chinese businessmen's intermarriage with native Hawaiian women gave them access to both land and political power. In his analysis of Chinese entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia, Mackie suggests:

> But one element of great importance that has not yet had the close analytical scrutiny it deserves was their [Chinese in Southeast Asia] political connections, both in the colonial era and since. Most took good care to cultivate good relations with the authorities on whose approval they had to rely. (1992:44)

Chinese migrants in Hawaii developed friendships and partnerships with native Hawaiians. In 1839, Apung entered into a sugar venture with Kamehameha III. King Kamehameha III provided the land and Apung was in charge of growing the sugar cane in exchange for forty percent of the final commodity (Char 1974:16-18). The most obvious example of migrant Chinese businessmen wooing the Hawaiian Monarchy is the Chinese Merchants' Ball of 1856, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Rice Farming

The involvement of the Chinese in Hawaii's rice industry was uniquely tied to the development of the sugar industry. Without the importation of Chinese laborers, it is unlikely that rice farming would have gained much momentum in Hawaii. One piece of legislation that worked in favor of Chinese enterprise in Hawaii was the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876. While the Treaty was negotiated to primarily benefit the sugar industry, under the terms of the Treaty, both sugar and rice could be exported to the United States, duty free.

Glick argues that the one advantage the early Chinese had in being the first plantation labor group to be imported into Hawaii, was that after fulfilling their labor contracts they could enter, almost unhindered, occupations that fitted their experience and skills (1980:45). Rice growing was the basic agricultural activity in the delta regions of Kwangtung province from which nearly all the migrants came, and most of them were at least familiar with traditional methods of rice production. But, in Hawaii, the Chinese grew rice not for mere subsistence but for a market. Not only was there a primary market for rice in Honolulu, but there was a great demand from California, especially following the Reciprocity Treaty. "During the 1860's Chinese growers introduced the Chinese varieties of rice in greatest demand on the Pacific Coast and, for nearly half a century, virtually monopolized rice production in Hawaii" (Glick 1980:46).

The conditions in Hawaii made rice production a most favourable occupation for migrant Chinese. Native Hawaiians cultivated taro by wet-farming methods in low-lying or terraced patches. With the depopulation of rural Hawaiian districts, land was readily available and easily converted into rice fields. The Chinese leased small plots averaging twenty-five to thirty acres (Glick 1980:47).

Life on the rice plantations was not nearly as regimented as on the sugar plantations. The men on the rice plantations were involved in a set of mutual obligations based on a sense of communal living and "brotherhood". "Desire for gain was shared by rice planters and workers alike, but personal ties tempered any tendencies to put the concerns of efficiency and profit before everything else" (Glick 1980:50).

As rice production prospered, a plantation system developed which dramatically differed from the established sugar plantation system. In order to succeed at rice farming, a number of Chinese had to pool both their capital and their labor. Hence, rice plantation development was dependent on systems of cooperative labor rather than enforced labor.

In the 1930s, Coulter and Chun interviewed some forty Chinese rice farmers. They characterize the two most common cooperative farming systems as *fun kung* and *hop pun* (Coulter and Chun 1937:17-18). Glick describes the *fun kung*, or "divide work" system, as:

> ...a modified "cropper" arrangement between a landlord and an organized group of workers. A man

> wanting to undertake the job of manager would make an agreement with the landlord and gather together a group of laborers; or a group of men who wanted to undertake the raising of a crop of rice at a given place might select one of their number as a manager who would then work out an arrangement with the landlord. Apart from furnishing the land, which he might himself only hold on lease, the landlord usually provided all the tools, machinery and draft animals. (1980:50-51)

The agreement between the landlord and the group of workers was most concerned with the ratio at which the crop would be divided at the end of the season. Therefore, the amount of profit generated depended on a successful harvest and this provided a powerful incentive for the laborers (Coulter and Chun 1937:18).

In the *hop pun*, or "partnership" system, two, three or four Chinese would set up an independent rice farm. Each man would contribute his share of the capital necessary for the enterprise. After leasing the land, the men were responsible for providing their own food, shelter, tools and draft animals, seed, fertilizer and labor. After the sale of the rice, the earnings were divided proportionately.

Coulter and Chun conclude that these traditional, "oriental", cooperative farming practices encouraged the growth of the rice industry in Hawaii (1937:34). Indeed, the Chinese continued to dominate the Hawaiian rice industry until the early 1900s. "In 1899, there were 504 rice farms covering an area of almost 10,000 acres and annually producing rice valued at more than $1,500,000" (Fuchs 1961:90). The Post-Annexation prohibition of Chinese immigration, the competition

with sugar plantations for land, the increasing numbers of Japanese laborers who preferred to import Japanese rice, and competition with rice growers in California contributed to the decline of the Hawaiian rice industry (Coulter and Chun 1937:53-59).

But growing rice was not the only enterprise in which the Chinese prospered. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Chinese migrants quickly expanded their business interests after 1852. The participation of Chinese in diverse business ventures was noted in 1882 by Reverend George L. Chaney:

> If you will ride slowly through the Chinese quarter with your eyes open, you will go to your home with food for thought. You will find watchmakers, and jewellers' shops, tinshops, shoe shops, tailor shops, saddle and harness shops, furniture shops, cabinet shops and bakeries all run by Chinese with Chinese workmen. You can find anywhere from a stove, or a shovel down through drugs, groceries, notions and whatnots. (quoted in Goo 1936:7)

Prior to 1852, when the first Chinese were imported as plantation laborers, Chinese merchants operated in a fairly open community. These entrepreneurs enjoyed unprecedented liberties in which to conduct business. The Merchants' Ball of 1856 represents the height of acceptance of the Chinese in Hawaii, by the Monarchy, the Hawaiians and the *haoles*. However, soon after the arrival of 195 Chinese laborers on the Thetis, anti-Chinese sentiments arose in Hawaii culminating in the first Chinese immigration restrictions thirty years later in 1883. The problems of crime, leprosy, prostitution, and

the opium trade were all laid at the feet of Chinese immigrants. But, through all the accusations and legislative restrictions, the Chinese struggled to secure better economic opportunities. And, commercial pursuits appear to be the environment in which the migrants thrived.

Chapter 3

The Sojourner Identity

Chinese migrants in Hawaii have typically been defined as sojourners. Glick was the first to distinguish Chinese migrants in Hawaii as sojourners, describing them as intending "...to 'exploit' the Islands and to return to their native villages--what is called in this study the 'sojourner attitude'..." (1938:3). Siu (1952) defines the sojourner as one who views the sojourn as a job to be completed in the shortest possible time. He isolates the sojourner as a "stranger" who clings to the culture of his own ethnic group and who is psychologically unwilling to see himself as a permanent resident in the country of his sojourn (1952:34). The sojourner identity promotes the view that immigrants are "marginal" and "unassimilable". Indeed some considered the first Chinese on the Islands difficult and inflexible because of their refusal to acculturate to Western standards (Daws 1968, Nordyke 1989). King Kamehameha IV disparaged the early Chinese arrivals for having "no affinities, attractions, or tendencies to blend with this or any other race" (Nordyke 1989:54). In other words, the sojourner identity has been used to rationalize why early Chinese migrants in Hawaii adhered to tradition. Char describes Chinese rice planters in Hawaii as sojourners:

> They [Chinese] came to make money and then to return to their homeland with higher social and

> economic status. They did not come to stay permanently. This explains much of their early social and political behavior--the tendency to stay close together in segregated plantation camps and to form little Chinatowns....They showed tolerance for temporary discomforts and discrimination and made little effort to participate in community affairs. (1975:92)

There is strong evidence that the early Chinese migrants were oriented toward their home of origin. Fuchs characterizes early Chinese migrants as psychologically isolated from Hawaii (1961:92). Upon arriving in Hawaii, many Chinese organized themselves into their familiar language, kin or village groups. "The laborers themselves preferred camps of their own, so they could practice the customs and traditions of their respective homelands and speak their native languages" (Takaki 1983:93). Cemetery societies were organized with the intention of one day returning the remains of the deceased back to China for proper burial in their ancestral home. As late as 1947, the Lin Yee Society, a member of the Manoa Chinese Cemetery association, was for the first time considering discontinuing this traditional plan (*Honolulu Star Bulletin*, April 18, 1947:7).

Remittances were dutifully sent home. In his analysis of Chinese migrants in nineteenth-century Vancouver, Yee argues that members of a lineage were expected to strengthen the wealth and status of the lineage through any means; migrants contributed to their lineage through remittances (1984:46). A similar argument can be applied to the Chinese in Hawaii. There is little documentation of the amount of money remitted

from Hawaii during the nineteenth century, but it must have been significant. In 1930, the Chinese consulate in Hawaii reported $3,930,000 remitted from Hawaii (Char 1975:127). Clearly, Chinese migrants continued to be financially tied to China for many years.

The danger of the concept of a "sojourner identity" arises when it is used to rationalize the Chinese migrant's behavior. For example, Glick suggests that the Chinese in Hawaii established "ethnic businesses" because they had no interest in forming long-term relationships with non-Chinese when they were going to leave Hawaii as soon as possible (1980:88-92). Similarly, Glick contends that Chinese rice farmers did not purchase land because they did not want to be tied to Hawaii:

> Indicative of the sojourner outlook and dominant profit motive was the temporary character of most of the ventures. Little effort was made, at first, to buy the land, even when it was possible: land was usually leased. The general flimsiness of the buildings on the rice plantations showed that at the outset the rice planter did not expect to settle permanently on the land. (1980:47)

There are alternative explanations for these trends. First, as shall be discussed in more detail, so-called Chinese "ethnic businesses" were often initially financed and patronized by *haoles* (Huang 1989).

As for the argument that the Chinese leased land for their enterprises because they did not want to become too attached to Hawaii, there is a long tradition of land leasing in Hawaii. Prior to the Great Mahele (land division) of 1848,

the chiefs of Hawaii had control of the land. The *ahupuaa* was the basic unit of possession, comprising a "wedge with its point in the mountains and its base at sea outside the reef" (Daws 1968:124). Included in the *ahupuaa* was not just the land but all the necessities of life that the land provided: wood, fish, birds, water and so on. Daws describes the role of the commoner in this system:

> Commoners were not serfs; they were free to move from one ahupuaa to another, from the train of one chief to another. But they had no rights in the land. They paid heavily in produce and labor for the privilege of cultivating the soil. (1968:124-125)

But it was not just the native Hawaiian commoner who depended on the chiefs for access to land. *Haole* men "...who wanted to do business on the Islands held property only at the pleasure of the chiefs" (Daws 1968:125). Therefore, from the beginning, the interests of the chiefs was in conflict with the interest of the *haoles*.

Under intense pressure from influential *haole* businessmen, the king gave up all rights to his land except for crown lands reserved for the reigning monarch. Chiefs were allowed to take out fee simple titles to land they had previously held in fief as retainers of the king. Commoners could buy small lots or *kuleanas* in fee simple. Both chiefs and commoners had to have their lands surveyed and pay a commutation fee to claim their title. More often than not, chiefs paid their fees in land. Foreigners were allowed to lease land for as long as fifty years, and in 1850 legislation

was passed allowing them to purchase property on the same terms as subjects of the kingdom (Daws 1968:126).

But in fact, Chinese entrepreneurs had leased land prior to the Great Mahele and continued to do so after the division of land. Some Chinese were fortunate to be able to afford land in Hawaii, but many laborers who were just entering business partnerships did not have the excess capital to invest in land. In addition, many Hawaiians were unwilling to sell their property but were willing to lease it. Glick suggests that, "Although Chinese like other foreigners, were permitted to buy land, the American and European businessmen were able to get control of larger tracts and more capital for plantation development" (1980:5).

Indeed, the primary beneficiaries of the Great Mahele were a select group of *haoles*. In 1893, *haole* revolutionaries overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy and in the process confiscated all rights to "crown lands" and government lands; these totalled an estimated 43% of the surface area of the Islands (Cooper and Daws 1990:2). *Haole* domination of land rights continued so that by World War II:

> ...when Hawaii was not much more than a tightly-controlled plantation society that was very profitable to those on top,...when the big companies and landed estates were more than content to maintain their enormous property holdings intact - at that stage in the history of Hawaii, almost half the total land area of the Islands was in the hands of fewer than 80 private owners. Government ownership accounted for most of the rest. As for productive agricultural land, most was in the hands of those same major private owners. (Cooper and Daws 1990:3)

While some individual Chinese were able to purchase land, most were unable to compete with the *haoles*.

A second limitation of the sojourner identity concept arises from presenting Chinese immigrants as a monolithic sojourning group. Lee argues:

> This popular historical interpretation has limited the images and understanding of the Chinese immigrants: it has set the stage by effectively creating a nameless, faceless, and characterless group of people who can then easily be labelled as 'sojourners' and nothing more. These 'sojourners' took on the characteristics and motivations of this particular identity: they were motivated almost exclusively by money and fortune-hunting. (1990:23)

The social backgrounds and motivations of the Chinese who migrated to Hawaii are more diverse than is suggested by the sojourner identity. They were peasant and merchant, refugee from the Taiping Rebellion, the desperate and the opportunistic. In other words, Chinese migrants hailed from all classes.

Moreover, it is unlikely that the majority of immigrants believed they could return to China economically triumphant. As Mei suggests:

> Most emigrant workers sought primarily to support themselves and their families; an optimistic but common goal would be retirement with a comfortable sum to live on. Probably very few genuinely expected to find fabulous riches abroad and return home extremely wealthy....(1979:487)

Therefore, presenting the Chinese as a fortune-hunting sojourner is not only an over-simplification of why the Chinese emigrated but also distinguishes the Chinese as motivated solely by money.

The Chinese were not the only immigrants in Hawaii who were seeking a better life. Indeed, the Americans and Europeans not only sought their fortunes but had the political power to influence the Kingdom to make decisions that would benefit them. Daws describes the domination of the Big Five - Castle & Cooke, Alexander & Baldwin, Theo. Davis & Co., C. Brewer & Co., and American Factors - by the beginning of the twentieth century:

> The Big Five controlled 75 percent of the sugar crop by 1910, and 96 percent by 1933. By a kind of inevitable extension they came to control as well every other business associated with sugar: banking; insurance; utilities; wholesale and retail merchandising; railroad transportation in the islands; shipping between islands and between the islands and California. The agencies, established in the nineteenth century to serve the plantations, had become the tail that wagged the dog. (1968:312)

Moreover, every one of the Big Five had at least one direct descendent of a missionary on its board; missionary names appeared on the boards of almost every important firm that did business in Honolulu (Daws 1968:313). This explains the Hawaiian saying, "Missionaries came to do good and did very well for themselves." Therefore, the Chinese in Hawaii were not the only ones who migrated with the intention of being prosperous. And, even though many Chinese were economically and politically successful, as a group their achievements never equalled that of their *haole* counterparts.

Contrary to what historians have led us to believe, sojourning is not restricted to the Chinese or other Asian groups. As Takaki demonstrates, large numbers of both Asians

and Europeans ventured to America planning to stay temporarily:

> Between 1895 and 1918....55 percent as many Englishmen returned home as left for the United States; the proportion was 46 percent for the Scots and 42 percent for the Irish....40 percent for Polish and 50 percent for Italians. (1989:10-11)

The fact that approximately fifty percent of the 46,000 Chinese who migrated to Hawaii before its Annexation in 1898 returned to China is not atypical migrant behavior. Thus, sojourning is not a peculiar Chinese or Asian phenomena. Rather the sojourner is a label that has been limited to Asians.

Therefore, utilizing the sojourner identity concept as an explanatory model of migrant behavior has its flaws. It is inaccurate to single out the Chinese in Hawaii as sojourners seeking their fortune. Clearly others who migrated to Hawaii had the same motivation. The assumption of sojourning also limits the analysis of the migrant's behavior in their new homeland. It is not valuable to explain behavior on the basis of sojourner attitudes. As Chan argues, by distinguishing between the "sojourner" and the "immigrant", scholars have effectively eliminated Asians from immigration history:

> With the single word *sojourner*, some oft-quoted scholars have banished Asians completely from the realm of immigration history. By arguing that all Asians were temporary migrants who came to the United States only to earn money, nativists and scholars alike have justified efforts to exclude them from immigrating altogether and from participating in American social and political life. (Chan 1990:38)

Therefore, restricting the sojourner identity to Asians is at best an over-simplification of reasons for migrating and at worst a form of discrimination.

Chinese on the Plantations

Although most Chinese migrated to Hawaii in search of a better life, the reality of plantation life was harsh, slavery only under a different name. The Chinese who worked the plantations were not only physically but also culturally isolated from the rest of Hawaii. Originally, the Chinese laborers were segregated from the Hawaiians on the plantations by William L. Lee's decree that segregation would promote a "healthy competition" between the two groups. Later, as Japanese and Portuguese were imported as plantation laborers, employers systematically developed an ethnically diverse labor force in order to create divisions among their workers rather than a unified labor force which might result in collusion and resistance (Takaki 1993:252). Takaki recalls the recommendation of plantation managers, "Keep a variety of laborers, that is different nationalities, and thus prevent any concerted action in case of strikes, for there are few, if any, cases of Japs, Chinese, and Portuguese entering into a strike as a unit" (1993:252).

Chan describes a typical day in the life of a plantation worker:

> Plantation work was both regimented and unpleasant. A 5 A.M. whistle roused the camps each morning.

> After a quick breakfast, laborers divided into gangs, each led by a luna [foreman], and set off for the fields at 5:30. These luna supervised each step in the production process, frequently on horseback. Some were infamous for their cruelty: they not only verbally abused the laborers but on occasion hit and kicked them to maintain discipline and to keep up the pace of production. They did not allow the worker to talk in the fields or even to stand up to stretch while hoeing weeds. (1991:36)

Given the circumstances it is not surprising that the Chinese resorted to extreme methods of protesting unfair treatment, the most desperate of all being suicide. As Prince Alexander Liholiho noted, "With all their [Chinese laborers] faults and a considerable disposition to hang themselves, they have been found very useful" (quoted in Coman 1903:25). The daily physical confrontations and resistance is unrecorded, but there is evidence that the plantation *lunas* often flogged recalcitrant workers (Takaki 1989:135). Apparently, these early immigrant Chinese did not fulfil the expectations of William L. Lee's speech congratulating the Society for securing such "quiet, able and willing men".

Despite the quick establishment of Chinese Christian churches and many conversions, the attitude that the Chinese were amoral infidels persisted. As late as 1895, Julian D. Hayne, the editor of *The Hawaiian*, wrote a scathing essay entitled "Money, Morals and Mongolians". In it, Hayne states:

> Spread out before you the little map of our christianized city, found in this number of The Hawaiian, and study its black spots. Every one of them points out the place where can be found a malignant moral cancer whose claws and cells are progressing, emaciating, corrupting and discharging

> their purulent immorality over and through every avenue and way of this complacent community. Mongolians. Ten years ago-in fact, a long way within that time-Honolulu was uncursed by this tribe. To-day the plagues of frogs, lice, flies, and boils which God brought upon Pharaoh's land in the days when Aaron's rod swallowed the serpents of the heathen magicians are not a similitude to the putrid plague of heathen Mongolians in Hawaii. What has brought this Oriental abomination upon this tropical land? Money-greed of gain. And the nation is as unable to cope with the calamity as physicians were with Oriental typhus. A red cross is painted on the door which makes the entrance way to Honolulu and written beneath are the words, "The Lord have mercy upon us!" (1895:275-276)

Although this diatribe is extreme, it does reveal the kinds of attitudes many Chinese faced in Hawaii; they were the "yellow peril".

Perhaps a more reasonable explanation for the racist attitudes of many *haoles* can be understood through the examination of Chinese involvement in business. Many Chinese escaped the plantations by seeking employment elsewhere. An unemployed Chinese population moving into Honolulu presented a problem for the Hawaiian government who responded by initiating a vagrancy law that allowed police to arrest "any Coolies who may be found roaming under suspicious circumstances, about the streets, at unreasonable hours of the night" (Lydon 1975:25). The terms "suspicious circumstances" and "unreasonable hours" were subject to the arresting officers' discretion.

The Chinese did have advocates who suggested that the vagrant Chinese be given the opportunity to farm by leasing them land. In fact an anonymous planter did volunteer to

lease parcels of land to Chinese wishing to cultivate rice (Lydon 1975:25). There is no evidence that this offer was taken by any Chinese although they did come to dominate rice cultivation in Hawaii.

The Chinese did not wait for approval from the *haole* community in seeking out alternative economic opportunities. Moving into urban centers, the Chinese ventured into all kinds of commercial enterprise. Daws notes:

> The first Chinese coolies brought to the islands in 1852 were expected to do their work on the plantations and no more. No one wanted them to enjoy the same range of opportunities as white men, or even natives. When they moved to the towns they were criticized as relentless invaders, unfair competitors, subverters of the established order. (1968:303)

Between 1854 and 1862, 291 Chinese held business licenses, including hawking and peddling, victualling, retail and plantation stores (Martin and Nelligan unpublished m.s. 1986:Table 1). Thus, the Chinese quickly transformed themselves from non-threatening coolies into competitors.

Huang (1989) charts the business licenses granted by the Minister of the Interior from 1854-1892. The tables record the ascendence of the Chinese in holding business licenses, so that by the 1880s, they were competing more successfully with the *haoles* than any other ethnic group in Hawaii (Huang 1989:90,119, Martin and Nelligan unpublished m.s. 1986:Table

1-4).[1] In 1854, the Chinese held a total of 63 business licenses: 25 hawking and peddling; 33 retail stores; 1 victualling house; 2 wholesale stores; and, 2 boats (Huang 1989:90). In 1894 they had expanded their business interests to include: 458 retail stores; 121 victualling houses; 11 wholesale stores; 4 awa [a native Hawaiian drink]; 3 horses; 15 public shows; 66 butchers; 1 peddling; 27 cake peddling; 3 spirits wholesale; 22 drays; 69 drivers; 89 hacks; 1 auction, 2 billiard and bowling; and, 25 lodging for a total of 884 licenses (Huang 1989:119). The Chinese dominated in retail stores, victualling houses, cake peddling, and wholesale stores. According to Huang's analysis, the *haole* community had good reason to fear the threat of Chinese domination in business. The predominance of Chinese in business was coupled with an increasing Chinese population. In 1889, there were 19,217 Chinese in Hawaii, or 21 percent of the total population.

In 1883, The Hawaiian Cabinet Council responded to the fears of the *haole* community by passing a resolution restricting Chinese immigration to 2,400 persons per year. Regulations in 1885 and 1886 virtually ended Chinese contract labor immigration by requiring that passports be issued only to residents who had been working in trade or industrial enterprises in Hawaii for at least one year, to Chinese women

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[1] The number of business licences does not equal the number of businessmen. It is quite likely that an individual businessman would be involved in several businesses at once.

and children and to a few residents of China who were invited to the Islands by the minister of foreign affairs (Nordyke 1989:56-57). The argument that the Chinese contributed to a competitive market was not acceptable to those who advocated stricter immigration regulations.

> ...there can be no "competition" between a Chinese and a white mechanic. It is simply a process of "substitution" of the former for the latter. A Chinese mechanic can, and does, live in his Oriental style on wages upon which a person with the requirements of Anglo-Saxon civilization cannot live, much less support and educate a family in a Christian manner. (*Hawaiian Almanac and Annual* 1890:83)

In 1898, supporters of Chinese immigration restrictions got their wish. Upon the annexation of Hawaii as a territory of the United States, Hawaii adopted the United States' Chinese Exclusion Act. Despite all these obstacles, both formal and informal, the Chinese in Hawaii were able to carve out a living for themselves.

An Imbalanced Sex Ratio

The early history of Chinese in Hawaii is typically characterized as a "bachelor" or "familyless" society. And an imbalanced sex ratio did exist for a number of reasons. Initially, Chinese women were not encouraged to migrate to Hawaii for a number of reasons. Traditional Chinese custom and filial obligation bound women to the home. Girls were reared to serve men and procreate. Takaki argues that, "Confucianism defined the place of a Chinese woman: she was instructed to obey her father as a daughter, her husband as a wife, and her eldest son as a widow" (1989:36). Chinese tradition dictated that respectable women did not stray from the home village.

Chinese women also remained in China because many of their migrating husbands thought they would only be gone temporarily; it would be too costly and impractical for wives to accompany their husbands. Instead, the wives of Chinese men who migrated stayed with their in-laws. Moreover, Takaki's "hostage theory" argues that women were kept home in order to ensure that their absent husbands would fulfil their obligations and send home remittances to support their families. Takaki states:

> By keeping the wives and children of their sons at home, parents hoped they would be able to buttress family ties and filial obligations. Their wandering sons would not forget their families in China and would send remittances home. (1989:37)

Therefore, cultural sanctions against women accompanying their

husbands to distant lands fulfilled the interests of the parents of emigrating sons by supposedly guaranteeing that their sons would continue to support the family (Chan 1991:104, Nee and Wong 1985:289).

Adams suggests that another cultural practice was an additional impediment for Chinese women to migrate to Hawaii: foot-binding.[2] Adams notes that even after a prolonged stay Chinese men were slow to secure wives (1937:145). He argues that a woman with bound feet was of little help to her financially struggling husband and therefore a man had to establish himself before he could afford a wife:

> Before 1900, when the American Exclusion Act became effective in Hawaii, most of the small number of prosperous Chinese men secured wives from China while most of the others remained unmarried. (Adams 1937:145-146)

Consequently, those Chinese who were economically successful could more easily acquire a wife; and, a type of "economic selection" resulted.

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[2] In the case of the Hakka, a dialect group, foot-binding was not practiced and Hakka men in Hawaii had a higher percentage of Chinese wives than did the Punti. (Adams 1937:145)

Consequences of an Imbalanced Sex Ratio on Hawaii's Chinese Community

The number of marriageable Chinese women in Hawaii was never significant and consequently a bachelor Chinese man had two choices: he could accept a life of perpetual bachelorhood or he could marry a woman of Hawaiian ancestry. Although the majority remained bachelors, many Chinese chose to marry Hawaiian women.

Adams argues that the Chinese pattern of intermarriage in Hawaii does not follow trends found amongst other immigrants (1937:142-144). That is, most new immigrants marry within their ethnic group and as they become more assimilated, marriage outside of their ethnic group becomes more acceptable and common. In contrast, a significant proportion of the early Chinese in Hawaii married Hawaiian women. However, as the availability of eligible Chinese women increased, both foreign and Hawaiian-born, Chinese men opted to marry within their ethnic group.

But, by all accounts, the union of Chinese and Hawaiian was relatively successful. The Chinese husband usually acquired a healthy and hard-working wife who could bear him children. And, perhaps more importantly, Hawaiian women frequently brought land to the marriage. The more astute Chinese businessmen married Hawaiian women of the *ali'i*, chiefly class, giving them access and influence in the Hawaiian community. Certainly, the Hawaiians considered the

Chinese to be industrious, thrifty and shrewd. An elderly Chinese-Hawaiian woman explains:

> Chinese men pick the most beautiful women of the country....These Chinese knew who were the best families and they picked out the prettiest girl, too. The *pake* [Chinese] knew the best families. They come to the house and ask plenty questions and that's how they find out. Oh, they smart people. They no want the low class people; they look for the best class. My mother was one of the prettiest women. Of course, we belong to the *alii* [chiefly] class. My father was the first Chinese doctor in Hawaii. He was a runaway from China. Went to Australia and then to California and by and by, of course, he came here,--about 1871. (quoted in Adams 1937:95)

However, the benefits of marriage were not all one sided. It is an old Hawaiian belief that Chinese men were more dependable than either Hawaiian or *haole* men. The same Chinese-Hawaiian woman explains:

> Hawaiian ladies like to marry Chinese better than *haole* [white]. The Chinese man take care of wife good. They not hit wife, they treat her good and they give them the best. Hawaiian lady marry Chinese man and she just like queen at home. Chinese men treat good....Yes, Hawaiians like to have their daughters marry Chinese....Hawaiian women say they don't like to marry *haole* men because they have to cook. If they marry Chinese they sit down like a queen--don't have to cook. The Chinese men cook. They used to say that if you marry *haole* your hair smell of smoke, because you have to do the cooking, but if you marry Chinese your hair smell of sandalwood.... (quoted in Adams 1937:95-96)

Lorden argues that the relatively high proportion of Chinese-Hawaiian marriages is due to the fact that the Chinese and Hawaiian individuals who intermarried did not have to face a hostile and disapproving community (1935:454). Adams agrees, "The social obstacles to out-marriage such as would

exist normally in a real Chinese community were not effective" (1937:146). Free from social censure, Chinese and Hawaiians were free to intermarry.

Prior to 1871, law required a foreigner to be naturalized as a subject of the king of Hawaii before he could marry a Hawaiian woman. The foreigner had to prove his good character and provide evidence that he would reside permanently in Hawaii. Adams estimates that from 1840 to 1870 approximately four hundred Chinese men were naturalized, almost all for the purposes of marriage (1937:146). Still more Chinese-Hawaiian couples lived together without a legal marriage.

Although free to intermarry, Chinese-Hawaiian couples did have to accommodate the two separate cultural backgrounds from which each originated. Lorden identifies three main types of accommodation: the Hawaiian, the Chinese and the bi-racial (1935:455-463). The Hawaiian type of family organization is characterized by the assimilation of Chinese men to Hawaiian tradition. These men, "squaw-men", lived in their wives' native village and their children were raised as Hawaiians. In the Chinese family, the husband educated his Hawaiian wife in the Chinese way of life and the couple lived in a predominantly Chinese community. Finally, the most common type of family organization was the bi-racial. In these cases, neither the Chinese nor the Hawaiian pattern dominated. Instead, there was a combination of both Chinese and Hawaiian elements. A Chinese-Hawaiian woman describes growing up in

such a household:

> My father can't eat Hawaiian food--he can't stand Hawaiian food.....My mother did most of the cooking and sometimes my father cooked. We always had two kinds of food on the table--Hawaiian food and Chinese food. When we follow our father and eat Chinese food we eat with chopsticks and bowls. But when we follow our mother and eat Hawaiian food we either eat with our fingers or with spoons.
>
> My father spoke Chinese to us at home. We answered him in Chinese most of the time. My mother spoke Hawaiian to us and we answered in Hawaiian.
>
> My father dressed in Chinese clothes--even when he died. My mother wore holoku [a long, one-piece dress, usually fitted and with a train and a yoke, patterned after the Mother Hubbards of the missionaries]. (quoted in Lorden 1935:459)

Apparently, these hybrid-families were absorbed into either the Chinese or the Hawaiian communities. There does not appear to be a "creolization" of the Chinese-Hawaiian offspring.[3] However, as the Chinese-Hawaiian families increased in number, there was some segregation into separate communities (Lorden 1935:460). Adams argues that there is little evidence of a Chinese-Hawaiian consciousness before 1910 (1937:89). Eventually, as the status of the Chinese in Hawaii improved, and as the opportunities to marry suitable Chinese women increased, the desirability of the Hawaiian woman decreased and there is a general decline in the number

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[3] This is the case for the first generation of Chinese-Hawaiian children. Evidently, as the Chinese community become more cohesive and organized, there was pressure for Chinese to marry Chinese. On the other hand, the Hawaiians generally accepted the mix-blooded offspring as Hawaiian.

of Chinese-Hawaiian marriages.[4]

Adams notes that there was a tendency for Chinese men to bring up their mix-blooded children as Chinese, especially the boys (1937:148-149). They participated in ancestor worship and the major Chinese festivals; they attended Chinese language schools; and, if the father had enough money, the son was sent back to China at the age of twelve for education and eventual marriage to a suitable Chinese wife. A case in point is Antone Keawemauhili Afong or Toney, son of Chun Afong and his Hawaiian wife Julia. As the eldest son, Toney was raised in China by his father's first wife, educated in Hawaii and at Harvard, and eventually helped manage his father's international business with his brothers. Toney married a Chinese woman and became a wealthy Hong Kong businessman and philanthropist and eventually became the governor of Kwangtung.

The shortage of Chinese women in Hawaii had repercussions beyond that of compelling Chinese men to marry Hawaiian women; it influenced the behavior of the migrant Chinese men. The ethnic segregation strategy employed by plantation managers coupled with the shortage of Chinese women available to begin families forced the plantation men to fend for themselves. Often forty to sixty men would be crowded into a single room,

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[4] There was a second peak in the number of Chinese-Hawaiian marriages after 1900 when the Chinese Exclusion Act, adopted by Hawaii after Annexation, eliminated the immigration of Chinese women to Hawaii (Adams 1937:147).

sleeping on mats after a day of back-breaking work. One thing the Chinese men seemed to miss the most was the availability of Chinese food. Chinese workers consistently complained about the lack of rice (Glick 1980:31).[5] And, not all growers were sympathetic to the workers' complaints. In 1866, one planter posted a notice announcing:

> The owner of the Waihee Plantation wishes to inform his Chinese laborers that he intends to strictly fulfill his part of the contract and expects his laborers to perform theirs. He will provide comfortable lodging and sufficient food-ie., as much as his laborers can consume without waste-but he will not nor has he agreed to give as much of any one kind of food as his laborers choose to consume. Hitherto he has indulged their choice on the rice question till most of his laborers have learned to eat other kinds of food grown in this country....He also gives a piece of ground to his laborers and has provided them with vegetable garden seeds-and a separate cooking place for the preparation of such food as they may wish outside of that prepared by the plantation cook. (quoted in Glick 1980:31)

Craving Chinese food, the laborers usually appointed one of their work gang the cook. The same Waihee Plantation manager explains:

> The Chinese usually made one of their gang the cook. He would fix their breakfast, and then cook their dinner and bring it hot to the field. They had to have hot dinner and hot tea to drink. The man who was made the cook usually shared just the same as the rest of the men. They would divide up what they made, so that all got the same.... (quoted in Glick 1980:33)

What would generally have been considered a woman's

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[5] The lack of cheap local rice may have propelled many Chinese into the rice growing business. Seizing the opportunity, the Chinese came to dominate the rice farms in Hawaii during the Nineteenth-century.

responsibility in China was undertaken by the migrant men due to necessity. If they wanted Chinese food, they had to make it themselves. This trend continued even after the men left the plantations. As previously discussed, Chinese men in Hawaii had a reputation for being excellent cooks.

However, learning the skills to satisfy personal food preferences may have later directed many of the migrant Chinese business choices. In 1842, the Hawaiian government required operating licenses for wholesale and retail stores, hotels and victualling houses. These licenses show that, after retailing, the greatest number of business licenses held by the Chinese was in victualling houses. In fact, during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese dominated Hawaii's restaurant business. In Honolulu alone, "They operated all of the 19 "coffee saloons," 42 of the 48 restaurants, and 10 of the 18 bakeries...listed in the 1896 directory..." (Glick 1980:80).

Hawaii had a vast number of transient visitors and bachelors, all of whom needed a public food service. Evidently, it was the Chinese who met Hawaii's demand for restaurants. After completing plantation contracts, and gaining experience as cooks, many men used their expertise to start their own business, as the story of Ah Fong demonstrates:

> Upon arrival, he [Ah Fong] and about ten others signed a contract for three years to work for the W---- Plantation on Oahu at $12.50 per month. During part of these three years he was a cook in

> the Chinese camp. When the contract expired, he decided to quit the plantation and to work in a restaurant as a cook. Ah Fong accordingly went to Honolulu, where he worked in a "coffee shop" owned by a relative....He had free lodging and meals at the shop and received at the start four dollars per week. (quoted in Glick 1980:79)

Ah Fong's story also demonstrates the importance of networks to a migrant community. Ah Fong's network of relatives and friends enabled him to seek employment off the plantation.

Clearly, the shortage of marriageable Chinese women had an impact on the development of the Chinese community in Hawaii. Life without women forced many men into what would generally be considered women's work. However, cooking, cleaning and doing laundry may have benefited the migrant men in the long run. Instead of being obliged to remain on the plantations many men with cooking experience sought employment in restaurants and eventually, began their own establishments.

Hawaii Encourages Chinese Women to Immigrate

Hawaii's strategy to actively encourage the immigration of Chinese women contrasts dramatically with the treatment of Chinese women in the continental United States who were discouraged and prevented from immigrating. And, there are a number of reasons why the Hawaiian Board of Immigration promoted the immigration of Chinese women.

A combination of missionary concern and employer self-interest promoted the immigration of Chinese women to Hawaii. As the Superintendent of the Chinese Mission, Frank Damon

toured the Islands of Hawaii and reported on the laborers and their work on rice farms and sugar plantations. Damon deplored the working conditions endured by the "familyless" Chinese men. In his visit to a rice farm that was owned and operated by Chinese men, Damon wrote:

> But on the rice and sugar plantations I was saddened by the sight of so many men, without women and children. It seemed unnatural, inhuman, this herding together in "quarters" of scores of laborers, as if they were so many animals. We speak of Chinese immigration to these islands. It is properly speaking no immigration, it is simply the transplanting of so many working machines to our fields and valleys. These same men would be better, more desirable laborers, if they had wives, and little ones with them. And how much of an impetus would be given to the missionary work, if there were here little children, who could help us in getting at the father's heart. (quoted in Char 1975:204)

Damon insisted that the presence of women and children would not only ameliorate working conditions for the Chinese men but would also provide a moral center for the Chinese community in Hawaii. The women could work alongside their husbands and the children could be converted to Christianity.

Similar sentiments about the positive influence of women were echoed by plantation managers who pleaded with authorities to bring Chinese women and children to Hawaii. Planter H.M. Whitney wrote in 1881, "With Chinese families established on every plantation...there would be much less fear of riotous disturbances....The influence of families especially where settlers locate in a foreign country-has always been a peaceful influence" (quoted in Takaki 1989:38-

39). Evidently planters were not so concerned with easing the conditions of their laborers. Rather, they believed that Chinese women could be used to control their laborers; the presence of women and children would diminish the possibility of a labor revolt.

However, it was not only the missionaries and plantation managers who maintained that women would stabilize the Chinese community. The Chinese men, isolated in Hawaii, were eager to transport their wives to Hawaii, or to marry a respectable Chinese woman in Hawaii, and establish families. Whether the migrant's family was located in Honolulu or in a rural district, it was generally recognized that establishing a family in the Islands brought stability to the migrant's life (Glick 1980:166). In 1936, a Chinese student explains how setting up a family in Hawaii affected his father:

> Before my Dad got married he was very unsteady. He worked here and there with no concern for the future. During his spare time, like most of his contemporary countrymen, he took to gambling...This kept on until the arrival of my mother....He began to realize his responsibilities to his wife and family. His carefree days were gone and he began to save his money....He was a changed man. (Glick 1980:166)

Still, it was not only the men who benefited from marriage. Joining a migrant husband in Hawaii provided a Chinese woman with an escape from the restrictions of living with her parents-in-law. As the above student recalls:

> My mother got economic security only when she came to Hawaii. While she was in China she had to live with my paternal grandmother. A daughter-in-law has no choice but to be under the domination of a

> mother-in-law. My mother had to eat what grandmother bought and like it....But as soon as she came to Hawaii and raised a family she was her own boss. Dad gave her money to spend and she was really independent. (Glick 1980:166)

It is unlikely that the needs and wants of Chinese laborers were seriously considered by the Hawaiian government. But, armed with the eloquent pleas of missionaries and planters, the Hawaiian Board of Immigration began to actively promote the immigration of Chinese women. In 1865, Dr. William Hillebrand was commissioned to recruit about five hundred Chinese laborers with the specification that twenty to twenty-five percent were to be married women. The passage of Chinese wives was paid for by the planters (Takaki 1989:39). Like their husbands, the Chinese women were expected to work on the plantations but were paid less - three dollars rather than four dollars a month (Takaki 1989:39). In 1883, the Hawaiian Cabinet Council, concerned that the Chinese had glutted the Hawaiian labor market, passed a resolution restricting Chinese immigration to 2400 persons per year (Nordyke 1989:56). However, merchants, women and children were exempt from the quota. In 1884, there were 871 foreign-born Chinese women in Hawaii and by 1896, there were 1,419 (Glick 1980:370).

Clearly, even with the government's efforts to rectify the sex imbalance, Chinese men in Hawaii far outnumbered Chinese women. Rather than living a life of bachelorhood, many men chose to marry Hawaiian women and start families.

Those who could afford to do so waited until a suitable Chinese wife could be imported. However, the overwhelming majority of them remained single. In 1900, of the 20,297 Chinese men residing in Hawaii, aged fifteen and over, 15,151 or seventy-five percent, were single, widowed or divorced (Adams 1937:150). The tragedy of the migrant community developing without women was that so many men were condemned to grow old without any familial support; a situation almost unheard of in China. The imbalanced sex ratio was not eliminated until the 1980 census reported 27,871 male and 28,414 female Chinese in Hawaii (Nordyke 1989:58).

The Sojourner versus the Settler

Glick distinguishes between "sojourner attitudes" and "settler attitudes":

> In situations where migrants enter a new habitat with the intention of settling permanently in the area, ties with the original community are more readily broken, over-looked and forgotten. Under these circumstances the migrant generally tends to co-operate actively in the establishment of a common cultural order in the same community in which he lives and struggles for a livelihood. (1938:3)

I argue that despite the intentions of so-called "sojourners", the attitudes and policies of the host society does influence how "settled" an immigrant community becomes.

Like the Chinese in Hawaii, the Chinese in California were imported as laborers during the 1850s. Unlike Hawaii, California imposed legislative measures which impeded the

integration of Chinese into the larger society. Anti-miscegenation laws prohibited the marriage of a Chinese man to a white woman. The 1874 Page Law which was passed to prevent the immigration of Chinese prostitutes, in fact, effectively prevented the immigration of Chinese women who were subjected to rigorous interrogations. Takaki refers to the statistics of 1882, when of the 39,579 Chinese who migrated to America only 136 were women (1989:40). In other words, mainland United States not only discouraged Chinese women from immigrating, it also prevented Chinese men from establishing families with non-Chinese women. This slowed the development of a native-born second generation which in turn restricted the occupational status of the Chinese in California as a whole (Chan 1990:66). Moreover, anti-Chinese sentiments arose in California almost immediately, culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The Alien Land Act prohibited the Chinese from purchasing property. All of these measures inhibited the integration of Chinese into California's society. Chan compares Asian immigrants to European immigrants:

> ...what set Asian immigrants apart was not the prejudice and violence they encountered but the discriminatory laws that aimed to deprive them of their means of livelihood, restrict their social mobility, and deny them political power. (1990:61-62)

The Chinese who migrated to Hawaii were essentially the same as those who migrated to California: they came from Kwangtung province; they migrated for the same reasons; and

they adhered to the same beliefs. In fact, many Chinese migrants who settled in Hawaii were displaced from California. However, in contrast to California, the policies of Hawaii enabled Chinese migrants to marry, establish families, find gainful employment *and* to retain their ties to China; this did not make them any less "settled" than any other immigrant group in Hawaii. Therefore, it is not so much the attitudes of the immigrants which determines their integration to their new homeland, as it is the attitudes of the host society. Notwithstanding plantation life, discrimination, and an imbalanced sex ratio, Chinese migrants made their presence in Hawaii known socially, politically and especially in the business community.

Chapter 4

Introduction

"...Chinese immigrant history has all too often been written as a faceless and nameless history" (Huang 1989:11). This chapter removes this anonymity by focusing on the lives of three Chinese businessmen who operated in Hawaii during the nineteenth century. I use three sources: Robert Dye's biographical paper on Chun Afong; Violet Lai's biography of her great-grandfather, Wong Aloiau; and, Chung Kun Ai's autobiography.

There are always questions associated with analyzing life-histories: Who is the author? When and why was the work written? Who is the intended audience? And, my three sources are not without their problems. Dates and names are sometimes confusing; and, to some extent, all three biographies rely on anecdotal information. Dye's paper on Chun Afong, although short, does present a fairly comprehensive picture of Afong's personal and professional life. Lai's biography of her great-grandfather focuses more on his family life than on his business affairs. C.K. Ai's autobiography provides the most detail regarding his business practices. Even with these difficulties, life-histories provide an insight to the Chinese-Hawaiian business experience that would otherwise be withheld. All three men were very different, but by "interviewing the dead" common patterns in their business

practices and experiences become evident (Freedman 1979[1963]: 385).

Chun Afong

> There was nothing striking in the appearance of Chun Ah Chun. He was rather undersized, as Chinese go, and the Chinese narrow shoulders and spareness of flesh were his. The average tourist, casually glimpsing him on the streets of Honolulu, would have concluded that he was a good-natured little Chinese, probably the proprietor of a prosperous laundry or tailorshop. In so far as good nature and prosperity went, the judgement would be correct, though beneath the mark; for Ah Chun was as good-natured as he was prosperous, and of the latter no man knew a tithe the tale. (London 1912[1982]:32)

This description from Jack London's fictional story of Chun Ah Chun is loosely based on Hawaii's most notorious and most successful Chinese entrepreneur, Chun Afong. Born Chun Kwowk Fun in 1825 in Meixi, an agricultural village north of Macao, Afong left for Honolulu in 1849 with an uncle. Left behind was his wife Lee Hong who remained with her mother-in-law, Tsum Yun, his two older brothers and four sisters.

In these early years, Afong concentrated mostly on establishing a store. In June 1854 he and Tong Chun leased a store from Chinese merchant Aiona for $1600 (Dye 1988:4). This first store was destroyed by fire in 1855 but by 1856 Afong was back in business with supplies from China and a new store bought from Stephen Reynolds for $1368.75 (Dye 1988:4).

Evidently, business was prosperous enough for Afong to build an impressive home in the mainly *haole* neighborhood on

Nuuanu Avenue in 1857. This lavish two story home was filled with both Chinese and Western furnishings (Kwok 1988:14). In May of the same year, Afong became a naturalized Hawaiian citizen, a requirement for legal marriage to native Hawaiian women, and married sixteen-year-old Julia Fayerweather, adopted daughter of Dr. Gerrit P. Judd and granddaughter of High Cheifess Ahia. One quarter Hawaiian, Julia identified strongly with her Hawaiian ancestry. "While her [Julia] husband traced his ancestry back thirteen generations, she traced her's back twice as far -- and that to a Hawaiian king" (Dye 1988:9).

Dye notes that it is probably because of Julia's identification with Hawaiian culture and practices that she had little problem accepting Afong's customs. First, polygamy was an acceptable practice amongst the *ali'i*, the ruling classes of Hawaiian society. Therefore, to be Afong's second wife was not a disagreeable prospect. Likewise, *hanai*, the Hawaiian system of adoption or foster childcare, was familiar to Julia. Her sister, Mary Jane, was raised by High Chiefess Kamakahonu and her mother was raised by Keopuolani, the "sacred queen" of Kamehameha the Great. So Julia had no objections to raising Afong's son from China while Afong's Chinese wife would raise their first born son in China (Dye 1988:9-10).

While it is reasonable, given her background, that Julia would concede to Afong's customs, it is more of a mystery why

the *haole* community had few objections. Despite the fact that Afong was already a husband and father in China, and polygamy was a practice frowned upon by most missionaries, Reverend Lowell Smith apparently suffered no qualms about legally marrying Afong and Julia (Dye 1988:8). Tolerance for plural marriages persisted under the Hawaiian monarchy and the enforcement of antibigamy laws was lax even after Annexation (Glick 1980:163). However, it is unclear whether Afong's wealth, status as a merchant, or his connections to the Monarchy influenced the acceptance of his marriage. The only one who seemed upset by Afong's marriage to Julia was her guardian Dr. Judd who placed a notice in *The Polynesian*, "Having eloped or been enticed away from my guardianship, I forbid all persons harboring or trusting her, under penalty of the law" (quoted in Dye 1988:7).

Nonetheless, Afong's marriage to Julia proved most advantageous. Julia brought land and strong affinal ties to the reigning Hawaiian Monarchy (Dye 1988:10). Her father was a respected businessman and pioneer sugar planter in the firm C. Brewer. Later, Julia's aunt, Marie Beckley, was appointed lady-in-waiting to Queen Kapiolani, further strengthening Afong's ties to the Monarchy (Dye 1988:15).

Afong diversified his business interests. In 1865, he and his cousin, Achuck, merged their Honolulu stores and opened a plantation store in Hilo to supply Afong's Kaupakuea sugar plantation. For years Afong was the only Chinese listed

as a majority holder of the Pepeekeo Plantation near Hilo. In addition, Afong and his two brothers had business interests in San Francisco, Hong Kong, Canton, Macao and Shanghai (Dye 1988:13).

Upon the death of King Lunalilo on February 3, 1874, Kalakaua announced his candidacy for king. His ambitions were violently opposed by Queen Emma; Emma had support from the British while the Americans disliked both candidates because of their supposed anti-American attitudes (Dye 1988:15). However, Afong and Benoni Davison, husband of Julia's sister Mary Jane, financially supported Kalakaua. Kalakaua won the legislative election and Afong gained political clout.

Faced with a declining Hawaiian population and the demands of plantation owners for labor, Kalakaua contracted Afong and Achuck and Chulen & Co. to import 100 Chinese. Although Achuck recruited in Hong Kong, he failed to meet the quota. Still, the following year Afong and Achuck were one of a number of Hawaiian firms contracted by the government to recruit 1400 Chinese (Dye 1988:16).

But, Afong's most notorious business dealings were in the opium trade. Opium had been used both medicinally and recreationally in Hawaii; although most believed the drug to be the scourge of the ignorant Chinese, plantation owners frequently provided their laborers with opium in order to "keep them happy". Opium was recognized as a problem and

several legislative measures were taken to control the trade.[1] In 1860, regulation of opium was taken out of the hands of physicians and only the Chinese were allowed unrestricted access to the drug. The government, hoping to profit from competing Chinese merchants, auctioned opium licences to the highest bidder. Unfortunately, for the government, the merchants met prior to the auction and decided amongst themselves who would purchase the license. The license sold for $2002, two dollars over the price set by the government (Dye 1988:13). Over the next decade, Afong and Achuck vied for monopoly of the Hawaiian opium business with other Chinese merchants. In 1874, opium was restricted to medicinal purposes.

By all accounts, Afong retained his "Chineseness" even after living overseas for decades. In dress, food, manner and affiliation, Afong identified with China. He learned the appropriate manners to interact with *haoles* in business matters but that was his only concession to Westernization. "Gossips said the cook at the Afong home had two menus for each meal -- Cantonese for him and Hawaiian for her [Julia]" (Dye 1988:10-11).

Afong's "Chineseness" both helped and hindered him when in 1879, Afong entered the political realm first as Privy

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[1] In an interview with a grandson of a woman who lived and worked on a plantation on Oahu, he remembered his grandmother talking about how she had transported opium to the workers in her lunch pail because the inspectors never bothered to search a small girl.

Counsellor to Kalakaua and next as Chinese Commercial Agent, China's representative to Hawaii. In 1879, Afong petitioned China's minister to Washington, Ch'en Lan-pin, to send a consul to Hawaii. Ch'en approved of the plan but because China and Hawaii had no treaty he suggested that it would be more appropriate to appoint a Commercial Agent instead. Ch'en recommended Afong for a one year appointment, beginning March 11, 1880.

Afong was to report to China's San Francisco consulate and to take no action without Ch'en's approval. Afong's first priority was to ensure that overseas Chinese be treated with dignity,

> ...to enter and leave Hawaii without restriction, to buy land and property, to testify before the Hawaiian government, to pursue all legal occupations, and to enroll their children in public schools; and that all labor contracts be voluntary. (Dye 1988:18)

Afong was commissioned to investigate the practices of recruiting firms. Although his intentions were good, Afong, as a Punti, was viewed suspiciously by the Hakka Chinese and by the American contingent in Hawaii. American annexationists "...feared he [Afong] would use his financial power to move Hawaii out of the American sphere and into the Chinese" (Dye 1988:1).

Afong's affiliation with Kalakaua also fuelled the American's fears. Kalakaua dreamed of a Polynesian confederacy and he promoted ties to Asia. Afong's economic and political ties to Kalakaua made him a prime target in

conspiracy theories (Dye 1988:23-24). After a troubled year, Afong ended his appointment as Commercial Agent.

Fifteen of Afong and Julia's children survived to adulthood; Emmeline, Nancy, Mary, Marie, Henrietta, Alice, Julia, Helen, Elizabeth, Caroline, Martha, Melanie, Toney, Albert, and Henry.

On October 17, 1890, Afong left Hawaii to return to his home village. He lived there until his death on September 25, 1906. His forty years in Hawaii were profitable ones; he was Hawaii's first Chinese millionaire, influential businessman and politician.

Wong Aloiau

On November 22, 1847, Wong Lo Yau, later known as Aloiau, was born to Wong Hin Tai and Chun Shee in the village of Pun Sha in the Province of Kwangtung, China. There, Aloiau and his brothers and sisters grew up amongst the 300 clan members who made up the House of Wong. At his father's insistence, Aloiau attended school, learning to read and write Chinese and to manipulate the abacus. In 1862, Aloiau was married to fourteen year old Hee Shee.

When Aloiau ventured to Hawaii in 1865, he was able to avoid the plantation experience by entering Honolulu under the aegis of his clansman, Wong Kwai. Wong Kwai had already established himself as a businessman and recruiter of Chinese

labor in Hawaii.[2] As his *heung-li*, clansman, Aloiau worked as an overseer of Wong's duck ponds in Loiliili-Waikiki and rice fields in Kapahulu. Aloiau learned enough pidgin to peddle ducks to the *haoles* and salted duck eggs to the Chinese (Lai 1985:8-13).

Aloiau left Oahu for Kauai around 1870. Kapaa was barely a town and without assistance from Wong Kwai, Aloiau's employment options were limited, but, once again, he avoided plantation labor by starting a wood gathering business (Lai 1985:17-19). Everyday, Aloiau and his Hawaiian employees would chop and gather wood from the Anahola forest to sell to local sugar plantations and ships anchored in Anahola Bay. With his savings, Aloiau was able to purchase his first piece of property on August 17, 1872 for $38.50 (Lai 1985:22-23).

Evidently, Aloiau worked as an overseer for one of Chulan & Co. rice plantations between 1872 and 1878 in addition to his wood gathering enterprise. But, in 1881 Aloiau claimed fifteen acres of planted rice, valued at $1,500, on his tax returns (Lai 1985:131-132). Over the years Aloiau steadily increased his rice production and established stores in Kapaa and Anahola. From 1881 through 1914, Aloiau harvested and processed approximately 1,767,500 pounds of rice valued at $32,920 (Lai 1985:144).

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[2] One of the principal partners in Chulan & Co., Wong Kwai received financial advances from the government in order to secure Chinese laborers from 1874 to 1877. During the 1860s and 1870s, Chulan & Co. was one of the largest Chinese businesses in the Islands (Glick 1980:205).

In conjunction with rice farming, Aloiau established his store, Ah Loy Yau, in Kapaa in 1880. He advertised his enterprise as:

> Has for sale a full assortment of all kinds and description of Dry Goods, Ready-Made Clothing, Fancy Goods, Hardware, Tinware, Crockery, Tobacco and Cigars, etc., etc.
> Attached to the Store is a good Boarding and Lodging House and Coffee Saloon; also, a Laundry. N.B.-Everything well cooked. (Lai 1985:145)

In actuality, Aloiau's rice plantations and stores had a symbiotic relationship. His plantation workers spent their wages on goods from the store.

By now, Aloiau, known as the "Rice King of Kapaa" was an influential and respected merchant. Apparently, Aloiau followed the Chinese precept, "Next to sons, land and gold are always good; they are permanent". Beginning with his first land purchase in 1872, Aloiau continued to increase his land holdings in Kapaa and Anahola. The land he didn't use directly he leased or rented. Rental income between the years 1917 to 1923 totalled $8,642.57 (Lai 1985:174-175).

Meanwhile, Aloiau's Chinese wife, Hee Shee had remained in China. Unfortunately, she never saw her husband again; she died in 1877. However, Aloiau had taken a companion on Kauai. Meliaka Kunane was fifteen years old when she went to live with Aloiau; and Ellen Aloiau Wong was born in 1877. Their relationship dissolved as informally as it had begun when Meliaka left Aloiau to live with Joseph Kepa Kainoa. Aloiau recognized his daughter, Ellen, and supported her with gifts

of money, food, wood and clothing. His son Wong Feart continued to support Ellen's children after her death in 1906.

Also in 1877, Aloiau married Emma Ellis, a beautiful half Hawaiian, half German girl; the births of Rose Lokelani Aloiau, Mollie Amoe Aloiau, and Elissa Aloiau soon followed. Sadly, Elissa, the only son, died at two months. But Aloiau had a son, Wong Feart, from his first wife in China. Wong Feart travelled to Kauai in 1878 and worked alongside his father in the rice fields and stores.

Aloiau's relationship with Emma deteriorated and he sued for divorce in 1889 citing desertion and infidelity. He married for a third time in 1891. This time Aloiau avoided the conflicts of an interracial marriage that had plagued him in his marriage to Emma. Instead he looked to China for a suitable mate. Tam Mew Hin arrived in Kapaa in 1892. Marriage at the age of 18 released Mew Hin after seven years as an indentured maid. Mew Hin was a good wife to Aloiau; she was a good and frugal housekeeper; she was able to cook a delicious nine-course meal for 300 guests; she followed the customs of her husband; and she presented Aloiau with six children: Vivian, Godfrey, Walter, Kenneth, Ralph and Edwin (Lai 1985:74-76).

In 1890 Wong Feart had married a beautiful and cultured Chinese woman named Ah Siu. Ironically, Mew Hin had been indentured to Ah Siu's best friend back in China. It was difficult for Ah Siu to assume a deferential role to Mew Hin

and she never let Mew Hin forget that she had once been a maid (Lai 1985:69). This relationship was a source of strife in Aloiau's life. But in general, Mew Hin brought stability to Aloiau and he was able to enjoy his influential position. The grandeur of his home was unrivaled in Kapaa. In fact, Aloiau bought and moved King Kalakaua's home from Kapahi to Kapaa. Decorated with crystal chandeliers, Chinese rugs and overstuffed furniture, Aloiau's was a grand place to entertain his guests, who included Kalakaua and Sun Yat-sen. Aloiau died on August 6, 1919.

Chung Kun Ai

Chung Kun Ai, later known as C.K. Ai, was born to Chung Cho and Chung Chang Shee in 1865 in the village of Sai-San, Chungshan District. C.K. Ai's father, Chung Cho was persuaded to venture to Hawaii in 1866 by his cousin, Sootoo. C.K. Ai's grandfather, Chung Cheu Gum, gave Chung Cho $5000 dollars to invest in commercial enterprises. Apparently, Sootoo swindled Chung Cho out of the $5000, but Chung Cho remained in Hawaii for twelve more years before returning to his ancestral village (Ai 1960:37-38).

In the meantime, C.K. Ai was enjoying his childhood as the pampered grandson of a prestigious family. His grandfather had a store in Macao, and grandfather and granduncle "owned much rich land" which was cultivated by tenant farmers.

Chung Cho returned to Sai-San in 1878. Within a year he booked passage for his wife, his newly born daughter and C.K. Ai to return to Hawaii with him; C.K. Ai was not quite fourteen years old. C.K. Ai remembers arriving in Honolulu in June of 1879. He stayed with the half-niece of his father's Hawaiian wife and soon enrolled in Iolani College, then called Bishop's School, while his father, mother and sister continued on to Kona, where his father had established his businesses. Initially, only three other Chinese boys attended the College: Tong Phong was the son of one the partners of the Sing Chong Company; Lee Butt was the brother-in-law of Chun Afong; and Sun Tai-Cheong, better known as Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, was sent to College by his brother.[3] By the end of the school year, ten Chinese were studying at Bishop's College (Ai 1960:46-53).

It was at College that C.K. Ai began to believe that Christianity was "the true religion". His friends, Tong Phong and Sun Tai-Cheong were baptized in Hong Kong, but C.K. Ai was forced to withdraw from College when his father learned of his desire to become Christian and refused to pay his tuition. But Christianity guided C.K. Ai's life. He was finally

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[3] Sun Yat-sen's older brother, Sun Mei, emigrated to Honolulu with his maternal uncle in 1871 at the age of seventeen. On Oahu, Sun Mei became a rice farmer and store-keeper. In 1881, he migrated to Maui and expanded his business to include ranching and stock raising. Tam Soong suggests that Sun Mei brought his brother to Hawaii, in 1879, so that he could help him in his business and farming enterprises. However, Sun Mei recognized his brother's intelligence and enroled him in Iolani School (Tam Soong 1989:19-20).

baptized in 1896 (Ai 1960:89).

C.K. Ai now entered into the business of making a living. His first business venture was the Chung Yee Tailor Shop in 1885 (Ai 1960:90-91). While living in Kona from 1881 through 1883, C.K. Ai had grown taro, tobacco and watermelons; and, he assisted his father by travelling to Honoapo, Waiohenu, Pahala, Hilo and Kona trying to collect debts owed to his father (Ai 1960:64-83). So, when he entered into his first business partnership, C.K. Ai was not unfamiliar with business practices. However, he was naive. One of the partners secretly invested money in another venture and the Chung Yee Tailor Shop accumulated debts. The partners went their separate ways but luckily for C.K Ai, his father paid off the debts, took over the shop and left C.K. Ai in charge.

From this inauspicious beginning, C.K. Ai entered into numerous business ventures: shipping pineapples, running a saloon, selling sewing machines, drilling artesian wells and opening a fish market. But, he is best known for City Mill, a lumber and home-building business that still exists today. C.K. Ai credits his half-brother, C.M. Kai, with the brainstorm of entering into the lumber and rice milling business in 1899 (Ai 1960:189). They leased a piece of property for $100 per month and then set out to raise $60,000 in capital at $100 per share. John Auderkirk, Sam McKay, William Mulch, L. Ah Leaong and Hong Quon were some of the first shareholders. Thus, the City Mill Company, Limited was

born. The Board of Directors was composed of: Uncle Wong Leong, Chung Muk-Heen, Wong Chow, Pang Cheong, Ho Fong and C. K. Ai (Ai 1960:190).

On January 19, 1900, the second fire to devastate Honolulu's Chinatown levelled City Mill's new building. With losses amounting to $55,000 and another $25,000 due to creditors, City Mill's future was uncertain. But, C.K. Ai and C.M. Kai started all over again, calling on friends and creditors, City Mill was reborn.

Throughout his autobiography, C.K. Ai does not discuss his family much. In 1889 or 1890, he married Chung Chang Shee. Widowed by 1895, C.K. Ai married Chung Shui Shee in 1896. In total, he had ten children: Hung Lum, Henry, Sam, David, Anna, Bessie, Clara, Dora, Esther and Jane. C.K. Ai died in 1961, one year after the publication of his autobiography. City Mill continues to prosper today as a "home improvement" center.

Apprenticeship

How did Chun Afong, Aloiau and C.K. Ai get involved in business? None of these men appear to have agonized over their career choice; business was the logical choice. Indeed, regardless of ethnicity, almost everyone in Hawaii was involved in business ventures at one time or another, including missionaries. Still, Chun Afong, Aloiau and C.K. Ai were apparently introduced to business through a relative or *heung-li*.

Like Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai, Chun Afong entered Hawaii under the aegis of a relative, or sponsor, in this case his uncle. It is not clear whether or not his uncle helped Afong establish his first store. However, Afong groomed his sons to participate in the family business. As previously discussed, Afong's son from his Chinese wife was raised in Hawaii while his Hawaiian son was sent to China. This exchanging of sons was to ensure that "...each boy learned another culture, its languages and customs, to prepare them for major roles in their father's international business venture" (Dye 1988:10). And, Afong was successful in preparing his sons for their roles in his business.

As previously mentioned, Afong and Julia's oldest son, Antone Keawemauhili or Toney, was raised in China, educated in Hawaii and at Harvard; Afong's Chinese son, Chun Lung, was raised in Hawaii and educated in Hawaii and at Yale. Chun Lung followed in his father's footsteps and in addition to

managing Pepeekeo Plantation, in 1887 he was awarded the license to import opium; he died in 1889. Toney married a Chinese, the only one of Afong's Hawaiian family to do so, and, along with Chun Lung, became a wealthy Hong Kong businessman and philanthropist.

> Under Afong's tutelage, Toney, now known as Chan Chik-ye, and his half-brother Chan Kang-yu built a commercial dynasty with financial interests in real estate, shipping, railroads, merchandising and agriculture. They were instrumental in establishing the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce and both served as its chairman. (Dye 1988:38)

Toney politically supported Che'en Chiung-ming, an ally of Sun Yat-sen. With General Che'en's backing, Toney became the governor of Kwangtung. However, General Che'en and Sun Yat-sen politically divided and Toney was removed from his position by Dr. Sun's allies.

Like Afong, Wong Aloiau's introduction to business is not clear. Certainly his connection to Wong Kwai enabled him to avoid working the plantations. As an overseer for Chulan & Co., Aloiau would have made contacts with other businessmen. What is clear is that Aloiau indoctrinated his son, Wong Feart, into a career in business.

When Wong Feart joined his father on Kauai in 1878, he was just twelve years old. Aloiau encouraged his son to complete three years at the local Hawaiian-language school before initiating him into the family business. So, Aloiau's "Number One Son" became the only Chinese in Kapaa who could speak, read and write in three languages: Chinese, Hawaiian

and English (Lai 1985:99). Lai describes Wong Feart's introduction to his father's businesses:

> As the only grown son of his father, Ah Fat [Wong Feart] catered to Aloiau and relieved him of much responsibility. From his arrival in 1878 from China until Aloiau's death in 1919, Ah Fat for more than forty years had shared the work, rewards, and frustrations of their climb from poor immigrants to successful businessmen. His father had explained his decision to phase out his wood-cutting business and concentrate on rice. Aloiau sensed that with the introduction of kerosene, wood would soon be replaced as a source of fuel. Rice, being the staple diet for the Chinese, Japanese, and even some Hawaiians, would be in good demand for many years, he surmised. Ah Fat was put to work as an assistant overseer of Aloiau's stores and rice plantations.
>
> Wong Feart also acted as his father's emissary and errand boy. (Lai 1985:100)

So, like his father, Wong Feart started his long career in business as an "apprentice" to someone with experience and contacts.

There is no question that Wong Feart was influenced by his father; he was a rice and sugar planter, a store-keeper, a land-owner and an unsuccessful money-lender, in addition to assisting in his father's business ventures. When Aloiau died in 1919, it was Wong Feart, "Number One Son", who became responsible for the family, ensuring Mew Hin's income and supporting his half-brothers and sisters until his death in 1942.

From 1881 to 1883, C.K. Ai acted as his father's assistant, collecting bad debts throughout Honoapo, Waiohenu, Pahala, Hilo and Kohala (Ai 1960:63). Not only did this provide C.K. Ai the opportunity to observe first-hand his

father's business practices, but it also brought him face-to-face with his father's business contacts.

> ...father began more and more to make use of me in his business transactions. Perhaps he was beginning to have a higher opinion of his son's business ability. Whenever he himself could not make the trip, he sent me to represent him. I therefore made various trips about the countryside, and made the acquaintance of many of the Chinese store-owners of our part of the island of Hawaii. (Ai 1960:83)

C.K. Ai describes his father as "a very enterprising man" with diverse business interests: cattle ranching, whaling, money-lender, retailing.

Therefore, when C.K. Ai entered into his first business partnership, he had an advantage: his father's business connections. After becoming a partner in the Chung Yee Tailor Shop, C.K. Ai approached his father for additional resources.

> ...father took me to Hackfeld and Company, the Hyman Brothers and Hoffschlaeger's to introduce me as his son, and to assure their managers that he would guarantee the payments of any goods that I should order from them. They took him at his word and did not ask for a written document, as is the practice today. (Ai 1960:91)

These early introductions proved invaluable to C.K. Ai who continued his credit relationships with these firms. He describes how he used his connections after City Mill burned down in 1900:

> ...I had already made up my mind to rebuild City Mill,....I then called on our creditors Allen and Robinson, Hackfeld and Company, and others. I called first on Hackfeld's and asked if Hackfeld's would hold off on our old bills until after the government had paid us off. We proposed to continue to do business with Hackfeld's and would pay them for whatever new purchases we should make

> from them. Hackfeld's agreed to do business with us on those terms....We were not called upon to sign any written document to that effect: in those days, a man's word was as good as his signature. (Ai 1960:195-196)

Evidently, Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai participated in a "network of enterprise"; either through an apprenticeship or through direct inheritance, these men were enculturated into a business career. Chun Afong and Wong Aloiau groomed their oldest sons to inherit the business. And, as the oldest son, C.K. Ai was introduced to business by his father. This generational transfer of business acumen enabled these men to participate in Hawaii's business community with great success.

Systems of Borrowing and Lending

Geertz was one of the first to identify "rotating credit associations" as a cooperative form of pooling resources that exists across a broad geographical area (1962). According to Geertz, the rotating credit association is an intermediate institution that enables immigrants to bridge the economic structure from agrarian to commercial (1962:259-260). In her comparative study of rotating credit associations, Ardener defines such associations as "formed upon a core of participants who agree to make regular contributions to a fund which in given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation" (1964:201). Briefly, a rotating credit association might work as follows: ten men meet every month and

contribute ten dollars each time. The pooled one hundred dollars is then given to one of the men; these men would continue to meet for ten months by which time each member would have received one hundred dollars. More complex rotating credit associations may provide interest on a contributor's original investment. Although local rotating credit associations may vary in terms of organization the essential structure remains fixed regardless of geography.

Both Geertz and Ardener discuss the use of rotating credit associations across Asia, particularly as practised by the Chinese and Japanese. Rotating credit associations, or *hui* in Cantonese, are believed to have existed in China for at least 800 years (Light 1972:23). Light argues that the proliferation of *hui*, as a means of acquiring capital for business purposes, is what accounts for the overrepresentation of Chinese in business in America (1972:20-23).

Historians of the Chinese in Hawaii also recognize the significance of the *hui*:

> In Hawaii, the immigrant Chinese formed many clubs, associations and societies. They formed a *hui* to pool resources for business ventures, clubs to gather together those persons origination from the same villages or the same districts, and transplanted organization patterns from China to Hawaii. (Char 1975:146)

Similarly, Glick states:

> Migrants who were still suspicious of Western savings institutions could get interest on their savings through the *wui* [hui]-a traditional Chinese credit or loan association they had transplanted to Hawaii....In Hawaii the *wui* was typically used by individual migrants or by partnerships-often to

> secure money for opening a new business or expanding an old one, as well as for other less directly economic purposes. The participants in the earlier *wuis* were almost invariably relatives or friends among whom there was mutual trust....The *wui* was ordinarily organized by immigrants who did not have sufficient economic standing in the business community at large to secure a commercial loan or did not know enough about financial institutions to apply for such a loan. (1980:104-105)

Despite these categorical statements, there is little archival evidence of the practice of *huis* in Hawaii. No doubt Chinese migrants in Hawaii would have used every known method of raising funds, including the *hui*. Aloiau's son, Walter, recalls his father holding *hui* funds not only because he was a trusted member of the community but also because he had the resources to cover delinquent participants (Lai 1985:193). However, this is the only reference to rotating credit associations found in the biographies of Chun Afong, C.K. Ai and Aloiau.

Instead, all three merchants were involved in a system of lending and borrowing that seems to have proliferated within the Chinese-Hawaiian community. A specialized class of moneylenders does not appear to have existed. Rather, anyone who had money may be approached for a loan and even successful businessmen would continue to borrow for reinvestment.

Apparently, this practice was a continuation of what was going on in China. Reverend Macgowan's observations on Chinese moneylending practices in the province of Fukien have been frequently cited:

> The great mass of the Chinese people are in a chronic state of debt. It seems to be the natural and normal state in which a Chinese passes his life. He is born into it; he grows up in it; he goes to school with it; he marries in it; and he ultimately leaves the world with the shadow of it resting on him in his last moments.
>
> This state of things does not seem to depress him in the least. It is a phase common to at least three-fifths of the whole community....No one is ashamed of being in debt, for as everybody knows his neighbour's business in China, any attempt to conceal the fact would be met with absolute failure. The very fact that debt is a permanent institution in the country may be a reason why men so light-heartedly incur it... (1909:171)

C.K. Ai recalls his grandfather's less than successful venture into moneylending. Those in the village who wanted to migrate without contracting themselves to a plantation had to raise passage fares for themselves. Many borrowed money with the promise of repaying it with interest. C.K. Ai's grandfather, Chung Cheu Gum, was one such moneylender:

> One condition of his loan of $60 was that each borrower was to pay back $120 as soon as he was able to do so. In all, grandfather must have helped 70 young men from our village and nearby villages to migrate to North and South America and also Australia. So far as I know, not one of these seventy odd persons repaid one cent. (Ai 1960:16)

Although lending money may have been the order of the day, it had its risks.

Moreover, generosity, in giving and lending, was valued. On Kauai, Aloiau, known as the "Rice King of Kapaa", owned a number of rental properties. His son, Wong Feart, argued that "he [Aloiau] was being overly generous with his rent-free tenants" (Lai 1985:210). Even though Aloiau was obliged to take out several loan to cover his expenses, he refused to

evict the delinquent tenants, who apparently lived rent-free on Aloiau's property for twenty years (Lai 1985:210).

In fact, Aloiau had a reputation to uphold; for many years he had provided a high standard of living for his family and in his later years, with his wealth depleted, he continued to give generously. Aloiau's journals indicate that he regularly sent *li-see*, a money gift wrapped in red paper, in amounts ranging from two to twenty dollars to close friends and relatives (Lai 1985:212). This was in addition to responding to his relatives in China who regularly appealed for handouts (Lai 1985:212).

Freedman characterizes the economic knowledge of Overseas Chinese as sophisticated:

> But the will and ability of Chinese to work hard could not have been the sufficient cause of their progress in the amassing of riches. They accumulated wealth because, in comparison with the people among whom they came to live, they were highly sophisticated in the handling of money. (1958:64)

Freedman points to "money loan associations", or rotating credit associations, as evidence of economic sophistication. He concludes that the money loan association demonstrates the "drive to lend as well as the pressure to borrow" (1958:65). Hard evidence of the existence of loan associations in Hawaii may be deficient, but the pressure to lend and borrow money is clear.

Throughout his life, C.K. Ai was subject to the monetary demands of his friends and family. Even knowing repayment was

unlikely, C.K. Ai felt obligated to help. He recounts a story of how a previously prosperous friend, Tong Phong, fell on hard times in Communist China. Tong Phong's letter pleaded:

> ...I humbly am writing this letter to you with the hope that you will kindly give me the $4000 H.K. to repay my debt so that I do not have to pay the high interest....I dare to ask this great favor of you only because I know very well that you are kind, generous and always willing to help others who are in trouble. Being such a good friend of mine, you certainly will not refuse my request and will give me the help I need. (Ai 1960:52)

C.K. Ai lent the money to Tong Phong and then "went about to interest his friends here on hi s behalf."

> I started the subscriptio with $200....I invited twenty four friends to luncheon at Wo Fat Restaurant, but only eight n persons attended. I gave each person present a copy of the letter. Then I wrote to other friends. In all I was able to collect $605 [U.S. dollars]. (Ai 1960:49)

C.K. Ai subsidized Tong Phong after his release from prison and continued to pay Tong Phong's widow a monthly allowance.

Although C.K. Ai accepted his financial obligation he also had a social network of Chinese in Hawaii from which he, and others, could draw on financially. On April 18, 1886, a fire rampaged through Honolulu's Chinatown, incinerating eight blocks with an estimated value of $1,750,000 of which approximately $230,000 was covered by insurance (Greer 1976:42). Between 5,000 to 8,000 Chinese, native Hawaiians and a small number of *haoles* were displaced. Because nearly all the Chinese resided in their place of business, their homeless numbers far outweighed any other ethnic group (Greer 1976:43). King Kalakaua's government responded with a $10,000

relief fund; the Immigration Depot, the Catholic Cathedral, the Chinese Church and the Fort Street Church opened their doors to the homeless; food and clothing were dispensed from various locations (Greer 1976:43-44).

Chinese merchants also took it upon themselves to organize assistance for those affected by the fire:

> Leading Chinese merchants appointed C. Afong and C. Alee to take donations for fire victims. Afong headed the subscription with a gift of $500, gave part of his office for a rival firm's use, and set up twenty or thirty beds with mosquito nets in his warehouse. Eventually the relief fund amounted to $3,890-most of it contributed by whites or white-owned businesses. (Greer 1976:45)

Although much of the relief fund was collected from *haoles*, it is typical that the Chinese did not rely on the government for compensation.

C.K. Ai describes the fire of 1886 as "The Great Fire" in which he lost everything he owned: a total of ten dollars (Ai 1960:96). But he also recalls how the Chinese community worked together to rebuild:

> The United Chinese Society Building was burned down. It had not carried any insurance. The Society therefore sent agents to all the Chinese communities on all the islands to collect two dollars from every Chinese. Enough money was raised to complete the rebuilding of the hall of the Society. Anyone could collect two dollars who had suffered from the fire and had no means of support. (Ai 1960:97)

Clearly, the United Chinese Society was confident that requests for money would be met. The Chinese-Hawaiian community served both a social and a financial function; and it was the responsibility of every Chinese migrant to fulfill

both these obligations or risk humiliation. C.K. Ai remembers Chun, a man from a well-to-do family in Hawaii, who wrapped a towel around his head and claimed he had been hurt in the fire in order to collect two dollars. "When the story became generally known, this man was deservedly criticized for his cupidity and shamelessness" (Ai 1960:97).

Evidently, Chinese-Hawaiian businessmen had a "network of enterprise" on which they could rely. This network provided training in a career in business as well as access to financial assistance. Light, Bhachu and Karageorgis argue that this kind of support is characteristic of migration networks:

> Migration networks also provide access to various kinds of mutual aid and assistance other than and in addition to information....Many immigrant entrepreneurs acquire their initial training in business in the course of an apprenticeship passed in the business of a coethnic. Once established in business, they can call upon primary social relationships, embedded in the migration network, for help in business. (1993:38-39)

Chinese migrants in Hawaii apparently transferred a traditional system of lending and borrowing to Hawaii and adapted it to their new homeland. Without access to this "network of enterprise", it is unlikely that Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai would have been able to survive in Hawaii's business community.

Moreover, access to the financial assistance this "network of enterprise" provided was not limited to migrant Chinese. Both Hawaiians and *haoles* participated in the

migrant Chinese community's system of lending and borrowing. In fact, Huang's examination of Chinese involuntary bankruptcy cases in Hawaii between 1851 and 1892 shows that German firms were the largest creditors to Chinese merchants, followed by Chinese firms and American and other European firms (1989:291). Therefore, what was originally a traditional Chinese system of lending and borrowing was transformed in Hawaii to a system which cross-cut the boundaries of ethnicity.

While Glick recognizes that migrant Chinese businessmen had to establish relationships with non-Chinese, he suggests that they were impersonal relationships:

> Involvement in the Island business community required migrant firms to deal with Caucasians and Hawaiians, especially those owning or controlling leased land, purchasers of crops raised by Chinese, representatives of shipping lines and warehouses, bankers, government officials, attorneys, and tax experts. These contacts were generally fairly impersonal, requiring of the migrant only a limited command of English or Hawaiian. Social relationships were usually restricted to the occasional Chinese banquet or civic affair. Migrants often turned over such contacts to Chinese associates who were more familiar with Western culture than they themselves were. Where this was possible the less acculturated businessman could confine most of his personal contacts to the Chinese community. (1980:89-90)

But, Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai not only maintained close ties to China and to the Chinese-Hawaiian community, they also developed close interpersonal relationships with both Hawaiians and *haoles*. Chun Afong and Wong Aloiau married Hawaiian women and raised families in

Hawaii. In fact, Aloiau and Emma named their first-born son, Elissa, after Chief Justice Elisha Allen, who had assisted Aloiau through the intricacies of the Honolulu Supreme Court (Lai 1985:21). And, C.K. Ai's relationship with Mr. Dowsett was most personal. C.K. Ai admits he learned as much about business from Mr. Dowsett as he did from his father and he describes Mr. Dowsett in glowing terms, "James I. Dowsett had meant much to me in my life and I will always think of him as my benefactor." (1960:137) Therefore, these men did not develop relationships with non-Chinese just for business purposes, they also found friends in Hawaii.

The Chinese Merchants' Ball

Perhaps the Chinese-Hawaiian community's greatest strength was its ability to act as a collective, especially when faced with a crisis. Those who led this collective were the merchants. But Chinese merchants in Hawaii were not only concerned with raising money through benevolent societies; they were also concerned with the image of the Chinese-Hawaiian business community as a whole. Chun Afong was involved in possibly the most ambitious social event organized by Chinese merchants in Hawaii: The Chinese Merchants' Ball.

> November 13th, 1856, the Chinese merchants of Honolulu and Lahaina combined, gave a grand ball to their Majesties the King and Queen in honor of their recent marriage. It took place in the court house, and was pronounced the most splendid affair of the kind ever seen in Honolulu. It cost the Chinese the sum of $3,700....Whenever the Chinese undertake anything of this sort there is nothing mean or stinted in the way of expenditure, and this first and best Chinese ball was gotten up in lavish style. The pastry and sweetmeats provided were something wonderful in variety and quantity. Two of the items for supper were six whole sheep roasted, and 150 chickens. (*The Hawaiian Annual* 1931:36-37)

The Chinese Merchants' Ball was not the first to celebrate the June 19, 1856 marriage of Liholiho, Kamehameha IV, to Emma Naea Rooke; the American Club held a Fourth of July Ball, while the German Club held a gala three weeks later in honor of Hawaii's new king and queen (Dye 1994:69). The Chinese business community was inspired by these events to show its loyalty to the throne by holding a ball more spectacular than that of their *haole* counterparts.

The committee established to arrange the Ball included, Asing, Yung Sheong, C.P. Samsing, Utai and Ahee, and Achuck, with Chun Afong as head. First on the agenda was to learn the popular dances of the day. So, the merchants faithfully attended Field's dance hall to master the waltz, polka, schottische, the quadrille and the gallopade (Dye 1994:70). Next Afong collected $3700 from his fellow merchants to cover the costs of the extravaganza that would be held at the Honolulu courthouse. Invitations were shamelessly sought after; and, approximately one thousand people attended the Ball, twice the numbers who had attended the royal wedding (Dye 1994:73).

The Ball was clearly an attempt to foster relationships with the reigning monarchs and the Chinese made every effort to learn the appropriate behavior. But learning to dance and speaking English were their only real concessions to Westernization. In fact, the Ball was a melding of Hawaiian, Western and Chinese traditions. When the royal couple arrived at the gala, they were escorted to a couch on a dais, flanked by Hawaiian flags and backed by an enormous, illuminated Hawaiian coat-of-arms (Dye 1994:74). A banner across the entrance greeted the guests in both Hawaiian and Chinese (Dye 1994:74). The ballroom was ringed by flags of all nations including a prominently displayed dragon of China (Dye 1994:74). Even the dance cards were in Cantonese.

The opening quadrille was made up of Her Majesty the

Queen and Mr. Yung Sheong; the King and Mrs. Gregg; Princess Kaahumanu and Monsieur Perin; Prince Kamehameha and Mrs. C. R. Bishop; Mr. Wyllie and Miss Hamlin; Captain Harvey, R.N., and Mrs Anthony; Captain Gisolme, French Navy, and Mrs. Henry Rhodes; Mr. Afong and Mrs. W. C. Parke; Mr. Ahee and Mrs. Cody; Mr. Gee Woo and Mrs. Aldrich (*The Hawaiian Annual* 1931:36-37).

After fourteen dances, the guests were served an impressive supper.

> The quantity and quality of the dishes was notable, but what most impressed the guests was their presentation; watermelons had dragons and reptiles carved into their rinds, and most amazing were pastries in the form of three-foot-high pagodas and temples complete with doors and windows with tiny balls hanging from them. (Dye 1994:76)

Afong had ordered the six roasted pigs and 150 chickens from Victor, the chef at the Canton Hotel, but the merchants themselves prepared the pastries and sweetmeats (Dye 1994:73). After supper, the guests returned to the hall for more dancing until the early hours of the following morning. The Chinese Merchants Ball was a pronounced a resounding success by all.

The Merchants' Ball is significant for a number of reasons: first, it demonstrates how the Chinese entrepreneurs worked together for a common goal. Although the thirty-odd Cantonese merchants were usually in stiff competition with each other, they cooperated when the goal was for the good of the group as a whole, selecting a leader who could straddle both the Chinese and the Western worlds.

In this case, the merchants were anxious to gain acceptance in the wider community. Whether they were viewed as odd, exotic or amusing by the *haole* community, the Merchants' Ball succeeded in bringing the Chinese businessmen sharply into focus; they had proven they could socialize on an equal footing. As the editor of the *Advertiser* stated, "if their efforts are an indication of their hearts, they as yet stand far above us outside barbarians in our efforts to 'honor the king'" (quoted in Dye 1994:76).

A second motivation behind the Merchants' Ball was to establish a personal relationship with the reigning monarchs. The Chinese felt that such a relationship would offer them the same protection from governmental abuse that their *haole* counterparts enjoyed (Dye 1994:70). According to Dye, "...the public image of the Cantonese merchants remained generally favorable, in part because of their unfailing generosity to the throne and their commitment to civic betterment" (1994:77).

Furthermore, the Ball provided the merchants the opportunity to distinguish themselves from the "coolies" being imported from Fukien to work the plantations. If nothing else, the Merchants' Ball made clear that, although fellow countrymen, the Cantonese businessmen were not of the same class as the Chinese contract laborers.

Therefore, the Ball represents the recognition by migrant Chinese businessmen that it was in their best interests to

cultivate relationships with other ethnic groups in Hawaii. Chinese merchants could not remain insular; without compromising their "Chineseness", Chinese businessmen sought connections with the Hawaiian Monarchy. They married Hawaiian women; they established financial relationships with *haole* businessmen; and, they distinguished themselves as sophisticated men who could contribute, both economically and socially, to Hawaii's cosmopolitan society.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I began this thesis with two questions: What was the "real" culture of migrant Chinese in Hawaii? And, how did Chinese in Hawaii succeed in business? In order to answer these questions I reviewed the history of the migration of Chinese to Hawaii and their early contributions to Hawaii's expanding agricultural economy. I argued that the portrayal of the Chinese-Hawaiian as the "sojourner" provides an inaccurate or limited interpretation of migrant Chinese behavior and experiences; and, the concept of the "sojourner" does not adequately explain the successful participation of Chinese in Hawaii's business community. Finally, I examined the life-histories of three successful Chinese-Hawaiian entrepreneurs.

Chinese migrants in Hawaii faced a number of challenges: Deliberately segregated from the rest of Hawaii, Chinese laborers endured long days, and even physical abuse, on the plantations. As their population increased and their participation in business expanded, the anti-Chinese movement gained momentum, culminating in immigration restrictions. And, a shortage of marriageable Chinese women condemned many migrants to a life of bachelorhood.

Proponents of the "sojourner" identity have maintained that these circumstances, along with the Chinese migrants'

intention to "exploit" the Islands and return to China, support the image of the "unassimilable" and "traditional" Chinese immigrant. In other words, Chinese migrants in Hawaii clung to their traditions and cultivated a closed, ethnic community as a response to these harsh conditions and discrimination.

However, the evidence suggests otherwise: Chinese migrants adapted to Hawaii and transformed their culture to fit their new homeland. Because of an imbalanced sex-ratio, many migrant Chinese married Hawaiian women. By all accounts, these hybrid-families were successful and a combination of both Chinese and Hawaiian cultures emerged. The migrant men also had to adapt to performing what would generally be considered women's work: cleaning, doing laundry and cooking. Learning these skills to satisfy personal preferences may have led to business decisions; as discussed in Chapter 2, the Chinese dominated Hawaii's restaurant business during the nineteenth century. To some extent, Chinese migrants' experiences in Hawaii were ameliorated by Hawaii's policies. Chinese men could intermarry with the native population, they could lease or purchase land, they could enter, relatively unhindered, almost any business venture. Therefore, both the Chinese migrants' adaptability *and* Hawaii's policies eased the integration of Chinese into Hawaii's multi-ethnic society.

In no way do the experiences of Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai represent the sum total of the Chinese experience

in Hawaii. However, examining their life-histories has provided unique insights into migrant Chinese business practices. They established a diverse number of businesses: retail stores, sugar plantations, distributing opium, recruiting labor, wood-gathering, rice plantations, real estate, tailor shop, shipping pineapples, saloons, selling sewing machines, artisan well-boring, fish market, rice milling and lumber yard. They took great risks and suffered great losses. They married and raised families in Hawaii. They were leaders within the Chinese-Hawaiian community; and, as such, they were sensitive to the plight of their fellow countrymen. And, they were concerned about the status migrant Chinese held in Hawaii's multi-ethnic business community.

In fact, Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai are the best evidence of Chinese migrants' adaptability. In Chapter 1, I argued that Chinese migrants could not have simply "transplanted" their culture in Hawaii. It does seem that Chinese businessmen transferred a "system of knowing" to Hawaii and adapted it to encompass their new environment. There was a generational transfer of knowledge of business through a "network of enterprise"; either through an apprenticeship or through direct inheritance, Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai were enculturated into a world of business.

Not only did this "network of enterprise" provide training, it also provided access to financial support through a system of borrowing and lending. Apparently, the obligation

to lend and to borrow was an extension of an informal system that existed in China. However, in Hawaii, this system was not limited by ethnicity. The Chinese extended credit to and borrowed from both Hawaiian and *haole* businessmen.

Indeed, Chinese businessmen were aware that if they wanted to expand their business ventures, if they wanted to generate financial support, they had to make connections which cross-cut ethnicity. Chun Afong and Wong Aloiau married Hawaiian women, and allied themselves with the Hawaiian Monarchy. C.K. Ai maintained a lifetime relationship with his *haole* creditors. These men did not have the luxury of "clinging" to their traditional culture; they had to adapt to their new surroundings.

What was the "real" culture of migrant Chinese in Hawaii? Apparently, the "real" culture is characterized by adaptability; it is not that the Chinese acculturated to Western standards, rather, they adjusted to the conditions of their new environment. How did the Chinese succeed in business in Hawaii? By transferring a "network of enterprise" and transforming it to fit its new environment; to sustain and expand business operations, migrant Chinese businessmen had to gain the social and economic support of Hawaiians and *haoles* alike. Although Chun Afong, Wong Aloiau and C.K. Ai retained their familial, financial and political ties to China, this did not inhibit their full participation in Hawaii's social, economic and political spheres.

This thesis demonstrates the need for current researchers to re-examine assumptions made by previous scholars; and, it proves the value of life-histories in pursuing this research. This is not the definitive work on Chinese migrants' business experiences in Hawaii. Rather, this thesis should generate more questions: Was the migrant Chinese businessman's experience ameliorated by his involvement with other ethnic groups in Hawaii? Who was involved in business partnerships in Hawaii? And, how did these partnerships work? How were Chinese businessmen's relationships with Japanese and Korean businessmen? Is there an "ethnic entrepreneur"? Or, is there an "entrepreneurial culture" which cross-cuts ethnicity? Clearly, further comparative research is necessary.

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